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KRISS

9MM PISTOL-CALIBER CARBINE PG. 46

1911 AMERICA'S HANDGUN PG. 138

INLAND MANUFACTURING
M1 PG. 84

VECTOR

<KRISS, Velocity Systems, Beyond Clothing, First Tactical, BLACKHAWK!, TacShield, ZEV Technologies, 45 Tactical, SureFire, DPx Gear – PG. 14

SURVIVOR TRUCK

PG. 34



EDITION CLINT SMITH "SKINNY GUN" PG. 94

+ BUIS

BUYER'S GUIDE PG. 116

- ▶ X15 FLAMETHROWER
- ▶ CMMG MK9 PDW
- ▶ HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE
- ▶ ELK HUNTING ON THE CHEAP
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- ▶ ZEROED IN: CLINT SMITH

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ISSUE 22

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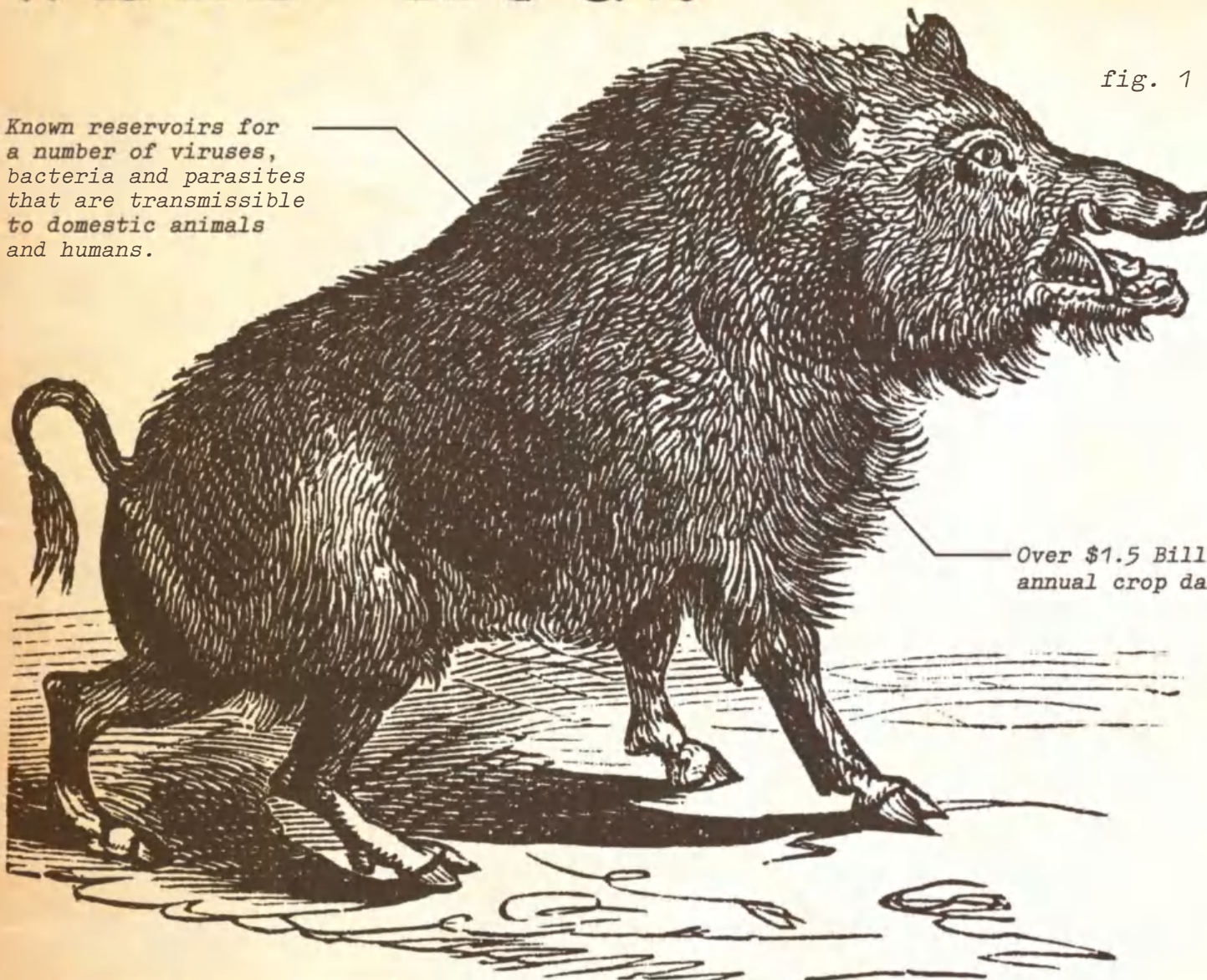
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Diagnosis:

WILD HOGS

fig. 1

Known reservoirs for
a number of viruses,
bacteria and parasites
that are transmissible
to domestic animals
and humans.



Over \$1.5 Billion in
annual crop damage.



fig. 2

Symptoms:

HEPATITIS E VIRUS:

Boar to Human transmission

TRICHINELLA SPIRALIS:

Human transmission via Infected Domestic Pigs

BOVINE TUBERCULOSIS:

Infects Cattle, Humans and Other Wildlife

Treatment:

TAKE YOUR SHOT



ThermoSight RS

fig. 3

ThermoSight T70



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POCKETS

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MAJOR SEAMS AND
STRESS POINTS

NYLON REINFORCED
POCKETS



CCW READY



DEVICE READY



ALWAYS
BE READY.

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Put Together Your Own Western Elk Hunt. It's Way Less Expensive Than You Might Think.



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from the nearest land
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RECOIL

ISSUE 22

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FIREARM SAFETY IS TOP PRIORITY

RECOIL reminds you to be safe and always obey firearms safety rules:

1. Treat every gun as if it were loaded.
2. Always keep the gun pointed in a safe direction.
3. Keep your finger off the trigger until ready to fire.
4. Be aware of your target's foreground and background.

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ON THE COVER



COVER PHOTO BY STRAIGHT 8

1 RIFLE

MAKE:
Kriss
MODEL:
Vector SBR
MSRP:
\$1,399 (SMG shown)
URL:
www.kriss-usa.com

2 SHIRT

MAKE:
Velocity Systems
MODEL:
BOSS Rugby
MSRP:
\$69
URL:
www.velsyst.com

3 JACKET

MAKE:
Beyond Clothing
MODEL:
A5 Rig Light Jacket
MSRP:
\$360
URL:
www.beyondclothing.com

4 PANTS

MAKE:
First Tactical
MODEL:
Men's Tactix Tactical Pant
MSRP:
\$65
URL:
www.firsttactical.com

5 WATCH

MAKE:
Blackhawk!
MODEL:
Deep Sea Operator Titanium
MSRP:
\$511
URL:
www.blackhawk.com

6 GLOVES

MAKE:
First Tactical
MODEL:
Hard Knuckle Glove
MSRP:
\$40
URL:
www.firsttactical.com

7 BELT

MAKE:
Tacshield
MODEL:
Tactical Gun Belt
MSRP:
\$60
URL:
www.tacshield.com

8 PISTOL

MAKE:
ZEV Technologies
MODEL:
G19
MSRP:
N/A
URL:
www.zevtechnologies.com

9 HOLSTER

MAKE:
45 Tactical
MODEL:
Belt Loop Carbon Fiber
MSRP:
\$65
URL:
45tacticaldesigns.com

10 WEAPON LIGHT

MAKE:
SureFire
MODEL:
XC1 Ultra-Compact LED
Handgun Light
MSRP:
\$299
URL:
www.surefire.com

Editor's Note: See page 46 for full article on KRISS Vector SMG version.

OFF THE COVER

11 KNIFE

MAKE:
DPx Gear
MODEL:
Heat/F Shred
MSRP:
\$250
URL:
www.dpxgear.com

12 MAG POUCH

MAKE:
45 Tactical
MODEL:
Double Mag Pouch
MSRP:
\$30
URL:
45tacticaldesigns.com





BY IAIN HARRISON

By the time this issue hits the shelves, we'll be 12 months away from a presidential election. This tends to sharpen the mind and loosen the purse strings of both politicians and free men alike, so let's reflect on what we've learned from previous experience.

Firstly, as primary season approaches, candidates will be pandering to their bases and trying to differentiate themselves from opponents within their parties. Many will take positions that may not truly reflect their views, but will differ enough from the rest of the field to make a difference to single-issue voters. Others will show their true colors, knowing full well that the system of checks and balances instituted by our founding fathers will never allow them to implement some of their more fascistic wet dreams. And there are a few that fervently believe that their own brilliant policies are the best thing since 40-round PMAGs, if only you bitter clingers would realize what's good for you.

As we get closer to November 2016, there will be a run on semi-autos of all description, ammunition in common calibers and magazines of all types, but especially those which hold more than 10 rounds. It doesn't take a crystal ball to figure this one out — it's pretty much baked in at this point. If you have any plans to add to your collection, you may as well do it now, because after January 1, prices will start to climb.

We've already had a hint of what might be in store for us in terms of policy proposals. Rushing to the podium within hours of the recent college shooting in Roseburg, Oregon,

the salesman-in-chief stated, "We know that other countries, in response to one mass shooting, have been able to craft laws that almost eliminate mass shootings. Friends of ours, allies of ours — Great Britain, Australia, countries like ours." Having experienced first hand the laws that our dear leader so admires, perhaps I can bring some real-world perspective to his academic musings.

Firstly, the premise of that argument is demonstrably false. Mass shootings in the United Kingdom and Australia were almost unknown, black swan events before the imposition of draconian firearms regulations, and have occurred with about the same frequency since then. On the other hand, in the two years following the U.K.'s handgun ban, armed crime as a whole almost doubled, according to a report by the UK Home Office Statistical Bulletin. Over the past two decades the U.S. has seen its own crime rates, and armed crime in particular, sink to historic lows while the number of firearms in circulation is at an all time high. So please, Mr. President, would you kindly explain that whole cause and effect thing to us dumb proles? (Perhaps while you're at it, being a constitutional scholar and all, you might take time to reflect on the text and meaning of not only the Second, but also the Fourth and Fifth Amendments.)

Secondly, the countries you so admire instituted the collective punishment of thousands of their most upstanding citizens — people who had done no wrong, but nevertheless, had their lawfully held property confiscated under penalty of law and threat of violence. I myself was forced to hand over my own pistols or face 10 years in prison. Having done that once, while still flushed with the innocence of youth, I'm in no mind to repeat the experience now that I'm older, wiser, grouchier, and more cynical. So to co-opt one of your own figures of speech, Mr. President, let me make this quite clear.

I will not comply.

STEVEN



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1

Known for making highly accurate rounds for precision shooters, Barnes Bullets now has its RangeAR Ammunition line for tactical and competitive shooters looking for high-quality training cartridges at affordable prices. Currently, the lead-free, copper-jacketed, zinc-core rounds come in 52-grain 5.56 NATO and 90-grain .300 AAC. We recently tested the 5.56 variety during a firearms course with Survival Edge Tactical Systems and were pleased to find the ammo performed flawlessly without a single malfunction.

MAKE:
Barnes Bullets

MODEL:
RangeAR Ammunition

MSRP:
\$19/box 5.56 NATO;
\$22/box .300 AAC

URL:
www.barnesbullets.com

2

Many people prefer small, slimmer-profile weapons such as the Glock 42, Glock 43, and S&W Shield for concealed carry. Others will only carry a pistol equipped with a weapon-mounted light. Since there are few WMLs for subcompacts and pocket guns, this can be problematic. Enter the Streamlight TLR-6, a tactical light with integral laser designed specifically for a G42/G43 frame like the one here from American Tool & Engraving, Inc. It pushes 100 lumens from a C4 LED illuminator and features a red laser, as well. Ambidextrous switching allows you to use one, the other, or both, and the CR1/3N lithium batteries can be replaced while the TLR-6 is mounted on the weapon (eliminating the need to resight the laser).

MAKE:
Streamlight

MODEL:
Streamlight TLR-6

MSRP:
\$105

URL:
www.streamlight.com

3

Let's face it, Promag has a hill to climb in terms of brand image. Our editor gave up on it years ago after failing to find one of its products that actually, you know, worked. In an effort to bring some much-needed reliability to its product line, it's introduced a polymer mag with a follower that incorporates four rollers, much like the vaunted Sterling SMG magazines of yore. At 19 bucks, they're worth a punt.

MAKE:
ProMag Industries

MODEL:
RM-30

MSRP:
\$19 mount

URL:
www.promagindustries.com

4

If you're going to mount a TLR-6 on your Glock 43, you'll need a holster. Tucking even a little blaster into your waistband looks great in a crime drama. It's moronic in real life. Here's an option — the Pitbull Tactical Bloodline Nocturnal. Available for right- or left-handed draw in 9- or 7-degree cant and full, half, or no sweat guard, this made-in-the-USA Kydex holster can be worn with belt loops on 1.5-inch or 1.75-inch belts. Each 0.06-inch Kydex holster comes with Kydex IWB belt clips, Kydex OWB belt loops, and Kydex wings. For those concerned with sartorial matters, Pitbull offers them in nearly a dozen different colors.

MAKE:
Pitbull Tactical

MODEL:
Bloodline Nocturnal BLN 1001

MSRP:
\$100

URL:
www.pitbulltactical.com

5

Twist, grab, scrape, and punch your way out of a tough spot with Multitasker Tool's Twist multitool. The beauty of the Twist is its self containment. The tube contains enough tools on its own to do the lion's share of light gun maintenance, repairs, and adjustments. Within the cylindrical innards on one end hides a carbon scraper, Glock compatible punch, and dental pick; each screws into the end of the tool's body, using it as a handle. The other end is a ¼-inch bit driver with an Aimpoint turret driver and a flat-head screwdriver built into the threaded cap. The whole thing isn't much bigger than a Sharpie and slips into a PALS slot for storage. It comes with a set of the most common Torx, Phillips, flat, and hex head bits.

MAKE:
Multitasker

MODEL:
Twist

MSRP:
\$60

URL:
www.multitaskertools.com





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6

Keeping a rifle at hand in a vehicle interior means shoving it between a seat and the console, hoping it doesn't come out in the moment of need with the remains of a burst ketchup packet all over the grip. The Rackbone keeps a rifle at the ready. While it may look complicated, once configured for your loadout with an Allen wrench, the assembled unit can move in and out of a vehicle without tools. The basic unit accommodates a rifle; the deluxe kit (shown) has bolt-on arms to attach just about any gear that you'd want to access quickly in a vehicle. The clamp version offers even more flexibility, mounting in or out of a vehicle. In your living room, the Rackbone can really bring a room together, adding an elegantly violent touch to any décor.

MAKE:
Condition Zero Mounts

MODEL:
Rackbone Weapon
Storage Mount

MSRP:
\$190, \$276 as shown

URL:
www.conditionzeromounts.com

7

"I wanted to make the best mount you could buy." Light, strong, precisely manufactured, and absolutely unmoving on the rail, Bill Geissele's Super Precision optic mount might just be that. The mount was made specifically for flat-top AR-pattern rifles and uses four shear lugs — two are machined, and two are the cross bolts. That's eight surfaces resisting recoil, which is important in semi-autos since they recoil in two directions. Geissele is also indexing the mount in an unconventional way for a more precise fit to the rail and plans on releasing a slew of models made for specific scopes with options for 0- and 20-degree bases, different finishes, and even the choice between an aluminum alloy and a stronger, aluminum-lithium material. This is a spring 2016 release, so expect more details, and maybe some changes, by SHOT Show.

MAKE:
Mount Geissele Automatics

MODEL:
Super Precision Optic Mount

MSRP:
About \$350

URL:
www.geissele.com

8

Plastics might be the future, but there's nothing futuristic about the stamped steel power of the proletariat. The Kalash looks best when it's dressed old school. Timbersmith takes great pains to handpick each component of its AK-47 Wooden Stock Set, ensuring your rifle has a consistent finish from handguard to buttstock. Aside from lending a slight air of bourgeois to the Century Arms RAS47 shown below, the made-in-America kit includes everything to make it a 922(r) compliant rifle. There are some nice touches, including a pre-installed metal buttplate and metal side sling swivel, predrilled storage for your cleaning rod, and even a factory fresh grip screw, washer, and bushing so you don't cross thread that sheetmetal and go all crazy Ivan.

MAKE:
Timbersmith

MODEL:
Romanian AK-47 Stock Set, Brown
Laminate

MSRP:

\$145

URL:
www.timbersmithusa.com

9

Civilized shooters like you run guns with cans, and what kind of karma do you get for making the world a quieter place? The universe thanks you by throwing gas and lube in your face. You're better than that, and your friends at Erathr3 know it. Instead of enduring gas face like Victorian era Englishmen, take the edge off with the Freedom Bone. Put a bunch of holes in a Raptor charging handle, and enough spent operating gas is redirected forward to make a difference. "No way," we thought. "The gas can't get out of the upper's charging handle channel." So, we shot a few hundred rounds using a suppressed SBR and can report it *does* take the sting out of your eyes. And it's made out of titanium. Because they wanted titanium.

MAKE:

Erathr3

MODEL:
Freedom Bone

MSRP:

\$300

URL:
www.erathr3.com

10

Lewis Machine and Tool's foray into IR aiming lasers shows their usual obsessive attention to making things smaller and better. Despite being eye-safe at less than 5 milliwatts, we still managed to effectively paint non-reflective targets at 1,000 yards on a drizzly night when seen through a PVS-14. Its low power setting is effective out to 300 yards and won't bloom out NVGs on close targets. And it's tiny. The unit takes up about as much rail space as a set of BUIS.

MAKE:

LMT

MODEL:

Precision Aiming Laser

MSRP:

\$799

URL:

www.lewismachine.net



6

7

8

9

10



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11

SIG's Legion Series is a loyalty program with a twist. Instead of accumulating meaningless points that are almost impossible to redeem for stuff you actually want, Legion members get exclusive guns, knives, and other stuff your mom wouldn't approve of. The first offerings are from their iconic DA/SA lineup and we'll be taking a long, hard look at the P229 Legion in an upcoming issue of CONCEALMENT. Does it live up to the hype? There's only one way to find out.

MAKE:
SIG SAUER

MODEL:
Legion Loyalty program

MSRP:
Membership comes with the purchase of a Legion series firearm

URL:
www.legionseries.com

12

Red dot. ACOG. Can't make up your mind? Why not both? Kinetic Development Group says you can use its new tool-free SIDELOK Aimpoint Micro Mount to switch optics without re-zeroing. KDG's patented cam system locks the optic down with a snap and removing it is just as easy; just push the trigger block in against spring pressure and it releases the mounting cam. Dual locks ensure the mount won't move unless you want it to. It's a lower third cowitness, works with all Aimpoint Micros, and weighs 2.9 ounces.

MAKE:
Kinetic Development Group

MODEL:
SIDELOK Aimpoint Micro Mount

MSRP:
\$139

URL:
www.kineticdg.com

13

Anyone who served in the last decade is used to having a little box on the end of their rifle. Be it an old-school PEQ-2 or a PEQ-15 ATPIAL or DBAL, there's no getting around the utility of a single device that serves as an aiming laser and a floodlight when working under night vision. Wilcox takes that little box and adds a couple of huge improvements to help engage targets at long range. They've combined the typical IR aiming laser, visible laser, and IR flood package with a laser range finder and an Applied Ballistics computer in one package. Lase a target, day or night, and the ballistic solution pops up on the display. The unit takes into account temperature, pressure, humidity, inclination, cant, and heading to the target. This is some high-grade military gear, for sure, but Wilcox is showing us integrated technologies like this are ready to hit the civilian market.

MAKE:
Wilcox Industries

MODEL:
RAPTAR-S

MSRP:
\$8,600

URL:
www.wilcoxind.com

14

Quad loaders have revolutionized the sport of three-gun. Because of their popularity, there's a sneaking suspicion that match directors have been making stages easier to accommodate competitors who use them, due to their propensity to drop shells like panties on prom night. Now that Safariland has thrown their R&D weight at the problem, we can go back to courses of fire that incorporate low ports, 'cause these shell holders hang on to ammo like a Walmart neckbeard. Thanks to a delrin plate that captures both the top and bottom of the shell, the only way to remove cartridges is from the front — far more secure than designs that simply clamp around the circumference.

MAKE:
Safariland

MODEL:
Shotshell Holder

MSRP:
not available at press time

URL:
www.safariland.com

15

The original Patriot Products Combat Optic Tool is a damned handy little implement, but it lacked one thing that would have made it a must-have. Lucky for us, someone at PP listened (or just figured it out on their own) and came out with a new version that adds a ½-inch wrench that works with our Leupold and Badger mounts. That's in addition to the ¾-inch and 10mm wrenches, rounded flat head (that works great in most scope caps since they're designed to work with the coin that you never seem to have in your pocket), a punch that works better than a bullet on bullet tip adjusted iron sights, and Aimpoint fangs. One tiny tool facilitates mounting and adjustment of just about every optic worth putting on your gun. The ¼-inch hex wrench also works as a bit driver, and the whole thing fits inside many storage compartment-equipped grips.

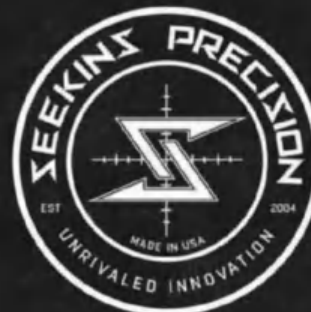
MAKE:
Patriot Products

MODEL:
CSAT Tool

MSRP:
\$20

URL:
www.robarguns.com





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France

Switzerland

VAL TROMPIA

Gardonne
Brescia

Milan

Italy

CONTAINING 90 PERCENT OF THE ITALIAN ARMS INDUSTRY, WHICH WAS FOUNDED BY THE ROMAN EMPIRE, THIS VALLEY IN NORTHERN ITALY HAS ALL THE HISTORY A GUN NUT COULD WISH FOR

STORY BY IAIN HARRISON / PHOTOS BY KENDA LENSEIGNE

Let's say you were planning on setting up a large manufacturing plant.

You'd probably look for a location with easy access to the sea, airports, rail, and roadways. A large population center from which to draw cheap labor wouldn't hurt, along with plenty of easily developed land for future expansion. In short, you'd end up in Houston. Val Trompia has none of these advantages. Why, then, did gun industry titans such as Beretta choose to hang their shingle here?

The reasons lie in history, and lots of it. The town of Gardonne lies at the heart of the Val Trompia valley, and it's here that you'll find the bulk of the Italian firearms industry. At its northern end, the valley terminates in a narrow, winding mountain pass —

the kind of ground where a handful of guys with a mortar and a sack of mines could tie up a brigade for a week. Its southern entrance is dominated by the fortified city of Brescia, which has been garrisoned since the Bronze Age. East and west limits are defined by mountains (the Brescian Prealps) that rise 6,000 feet above the valley floor. So, with only one way in, it's about as close to a natural fortress as you'll find.

Deposits of iron ore were discovered during the Roman era, and with wood and charcoal readily available from the steep slopes surrounding the valley and water from the Mella River flowing year-round, it didn't take long for a thriving arms industry to evolve. After the fall of the Roman Empire and

sacking of Brescia by the Visigoths, there followed about 1,000 years in which the territory changed hands between the usual coterie of central European hard men and warlords such as Barbarossa, Charlemagne, the Lombards, and the leagues of Milan and Venice. Despite periodic wars, sieges, sackings by the French, and acts of God such as a lightning strike that set off almost 1,000 tons of black powder and leveled one sixth of Brescia, the area grew into a major industrial powerhouse. It was in this environment that the firearms industry grew, secure in its mountain redoubt and with a ready market for its wares.





1. The Beretta family home (right) was built right next to the factory (left). Evidently, they weren't big on the whole commuting thing.

2. Like most European arms makers, Beretta diversified during the inter war years into transportation.

3. Following the award of the M9 contract, some genius in GM's marketing department decided it would be a brilliant idea to name their new Chevy the Beretta, without asking the trademark holders if that was OK. Roger Smith personally delivered an apology. And a car.

4. Formerly the company's retail storefront attached to the family home, the Beretta museum now houses examples of their previous work.

Perhaps the best illustration of how Val Trompia developed from the Middle Ages onward is found in the history of its biggest player. Beretta's earliest known records date from 1526, when a contract for the delivery of 158 harqebus barrels to the republic of Venice was issued to Bartolomeo Beretta, though it is believed that barrel manufacture was well established by this time. There are records of Leonardo da Vinci (1452 to 1519) visiting the valley in order to acquaint himself with firearms technology. The company has been family

owned ever since and indeed, at 16 generations, is the second-oldest family business in the world.

For centuries, the Beretta company specialized in barrel manufacturing, building on insider knowledge passed down from father to son. They supplied other firms in the valley that would then assemble components sourced from various subcontractors into complete firearms. This state of affairs continued until the stewardship of Giuseppe Beretta who in 1887 built a new factory attached to the family

home in order to become a complete firearm maker. This factory is still in use today, and the original retail storefront that faces the street is now the Beretta family firearms museum, which houses a priceless collection of 1,500 examples of the company's work.

Giuseppe's era also encompassed a westward expansion. Recognizing that the world was about to enter the American century, an active export market was established, relationships with U.S. dealers cultivated, and models to satisfy American tastes introduced. The transatlantic connection culminated in the M9 pistol contracts and after 30 years of service and 600,000 units, the company is actively pursuing the bid for its replacement by the Army's Modular Handgun system.

During the past couple of decades, the company has gone on a buying spree, snapping up firms such as Benelli, Sako, Steiner, Franchi, Stoeger, Laser Devices, Uberti, Tikka, and Burris, in order to create a one-stop shop for prospective clients. Beretta Defense Technologies is a subset of this conglomerate, consisting of the parent company, plus the first three on that list, which was formed to pursue government contracts worldwide.



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Hemmed in by high mountain ranges, the scenery from Beretta's factory is spectacular.

We've visited several gun companies over the past years. Few come close to Beretta's level of sophistication. Their main facility feels like it should be producing CPUs or Camrys rather than machine guns. While we visited just before everyone disappeared for their month-long summer vacation

(this is Italy, after all), and the shop floor atmosphere was quiet, serene almost. Instead of the typical situation in U.S. plants where one employee is responsible for one particular machining center, including setup, calibration, loading, and unloading, here robots took care of most of the grunt

work, picking out finished frames and replacing them with raw forgings. Whether this is due to a commitment to repeatability or merely a reflection of highly restrictive labor laws is open to debate, but the ratio of humans to robots was very noticeable.

To the north and south of the Beretta plant are various suppliers, and it's not unusual to see stacks of walnut blanks sitting under shed roofs on the side of woodworking shops, patiently awaiting their turn to be shaped into shotgun stocks. Engraving studios and extrusion plants jostle for real estate, hemmed in by topography. In order to create test ranges that didn't disturb the neighbors or take up space that could be used for production, Beretta workers tunneled into the mountainside during the 1930s. They used the same tunnels to escape Allied bombing raids a decade later.

Although most of the factories in the Val Trompia are not set up as tourist destinations (Perazzi being the



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exception), the area itself has much to attract and entertain visiting gun enthusiasts. Unlike Venice to the east, which is overrun by selfie-snapping idiot hordes, the gritty industrial capital of northern Italy sees comparatively few leisure travelers — when we visited Brescia castle at 0900 hours on a Friday, we had the place to ourselves apart from one old guy pushing a broom, and took the opportunity to chat at length with museum staff about their extensive collection of medieval arms and armor. Although not as polished as some destinations, it offers good value accommodation, great food and wines, and has about five millennia worth of history on display. Plus, if you can't make it to SHOT Show in Vegas this January, why not use the excuse for a Valentine's Day trip to its Italian equivalent, HIT (Hunting Individual Protection and Target Sports Expo). Chicks dig romantic bastards. 

WHERE:

Brescia and Val Trompia, Italy

GETTING THERE:

International flights to Milan

STUFF TO DO AND SEE:

- » Brescia Castle
- » Roman ruins including several UNESCO world heritage sites
- » Luigi Marzoli Arms Museum
- » HIT — Hunting Individual Protection and Target Sports Expo, Vicenza. February 13-15 2016

1. Machining centers and tropical plants. So very European.

2. Robots move parts from one machine to the next, day in, day out. Although initially expensive, reportedly none have submitted workers comp claims for repetitive strain injuries.

3. Pig products and beer. You know, these Italian dudes are alright...

4. This guy, however, is an asshole.

5. Following the end of hostilities, the Beretta family commissioned a new home in order to keep families who had worked for them for five generations gainfully employed.

6. Hop 6 miles over the mountains to the next valley and Lake D'Iseo awaits. They have beer and pig products here, too.



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VENGEANCE FRONT BUMPER W/ PRE-RUNNER GUARD

JEOP JK



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STORY BY JOHN SCHWARTZE
PHOTOS BY IAIN HARRISON

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Back in RECOIL Issue 8 we featured Jim DeLozier's Survivor Truck — a 1980 Chevy C70 kitted up with just about everything a doomsday prepper could want on a vehicle...and then some. We figured it wouldn't be the last time we heard from someone so serious about stayin' alive. Well, guess what? He's at it again; this time with a 2000 Ford Excursion that leaves little, if anything, off the survival gear checklist. Many of you may wonder why he's created another version. A glutton for gear, you might ask? That may be

so. But like owning a gun, there's not one that works perfectly for every situation. While you might think having two vehicles this extreme is overkill, Jim considers it practicality.

The first truck is more of an evacuation/gauntlet breaker, but the second iteration could be used as a daily driver. The Excursion is the largest SUV made — packing up gear and five adults that may be wearing body armor, you need all the room available. The stock V-10 gas engine was ditched in favor of a diesel 5.9L '97 Cummins 6BT to get better mileage and, if necessary, run on biodiesel, Jet A, Jet B, or kerosene. Jim selected this engine since it was the

last year of non-computerized Cummins engines and it will, theoretically, run after an EMP strike. It's all tied to an ATS diesel transmission with a Five Star Viscous Clutch Drive torque converter and extra deep pan.

With all the equipment and modification on this truck, it's tipping the scales at around 11,500 pounds, so the suspension had to be robust. The front was given a Pro Comp BMX 8.5-inch lift with dual-reservoir shocks and an AGR Performance RockRam hydraulic-assist steering module. The rear consists of a Firestone Ride-Rite system, custom tuned leaf springs, and single-reservoir shocks. It's all rolling on RBP Fury wheels rated at 3,500 pounds and Pro Comp 37-inch MT2 rubber that are brought to a stop by SSBC eight-piston calipers and slotted rotors all around.

Although not armored, the exterior was coated with Rhino Linings and given a custom 1.75x.120-wall DOM



1 TIRES

MAKE:
Pro Comp
MODEL:
MT2, 37-inch
URL:
www.procompusa.com

2 WHEELS

MAKE:
RBP
MODEL:
Fury, 20-inch
URL:
www.rollingbigpower.com

3 JACK

MAKE:
Cequent Performance Products
MODEL:
Bulldog SWL 190 DL-BTSMQ
URL:
www.bulldogproducts.net

4 LIGHT

MAKE:
Light Force
MODEL:
XGT Xenon 100-watt w/clear, red, green, IR filters
URL:
www.lightforce.com

5 LIGHT

MAKE:
Go Light
MODEL:
Stryker LED
URL:
www.golight.com

6 LIGHT BAR

MAKE:
Pro Comp
MODEL:
50-inch dual row LED combo beam
URL:
www.procompusa.com

7 FOOTLOCKERS, COOLERS

MAKE:
Pelican, Engel USA
URL:
www.pelican.com
www.engelcoolers.com

8 SUPPLIES

MAKE:
Watershed Drybag with United Tactical SPEEDS Kit, CBRN gear, and Scott Safety SCBA
URL:
www.drybags.com
www.unitedtacticalsupply.com
www.scottsafety.com

9 FLUID STORAGE

MAKE:
Rotopax
URL:
www.rotopax.com



10 AWNING

MAKE:
Smittybilt
MODEL:
Overlander
URL:
www.smittybilt.com

11 CAMERAS

MAKE:
VDO
URL:
www.vdo-gauges.com

12 ANTENNAS

MAKE:
Firestik CB antenna, Mobile Mark 3G/4G/LTE
URL:
www.firestik.com
www.mobilemark.com

tubing exoskeleton, courtesy of Nichols AutoFab in Prescott, Arizona. Smittybilt accessories abound, including two 12,000-pound winches, as well as their Defender roof rack, canopy, trail jacks, shovel and axe mount, and traction ramps. 928 Solutions treated the windows with their low-glare vinyl wrap. And there's certainly no shortage of lighting with ProComp Explorer LED light bars, Whelen emergency, Light-force xenon, and Golight 360-degree pan units.

Of course security is part of survival, so optical surveillance comes from

BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE

eight VDO force protection cameras, an Avigilon 5 megapixel minidome in a Dotworkz bulletproof housing, and Samsung HD day/night cameras — all working in conjunction with motion detectors, microphones, an Optex perimeter laser scanner system, and a Helios thermal imaging system to provide a virtual fence out to 1,500 meters while stationary. The platform is kept stable using a Cequent Products Bulldog Jacks external load stabilizing system. Three VDO and two Tote Vision monitors let you keep an eye on things from inside the cab, while a Viper alarm keeps occupants from being snuck up on.

The interior (or command center, rather) is a cross between what originally came from the factory and something that resembles a police cruiser. Communications consist of Harris communications handheld radios and radiohead, a Cobra CB, Yaesu handheld HAM radio, Panasonic Toughbook / Toughpad in Havis docking stations, Havis center console with



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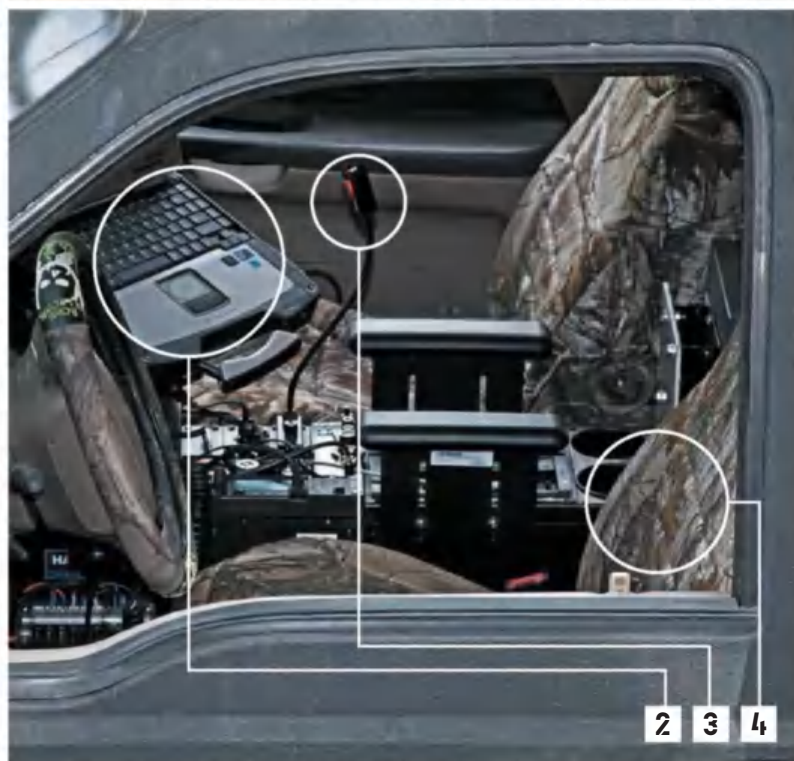
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1



2 3 4

1 TENT

MAKE:
Cascadia Vehicle Tents
MODEL:
Mt. Hood
URL:
www.cascadiatents.com

2 LAPTOP

MAKE:
Panasonic
MODEL:
CF-31 Toughbook
URL:
shop.panasonic.com

3 MAP LIGHT

MAKE:
Havis
URL:
www.havis.com

4 SEAT COVERS

MAKE:
Wet Okole
MODEL:
custom with MOLLE webbing
URL:
www.wetokole.com

Blue Sea switches, Cradlepoint router, Mobile Mark and Firestik antennas, and Wamar Technologies network and signal extenders. The seats have Wet Okole seat covers with MOLLE webbing and Tuff Products MOLLE nylon gear, with Husky Liners protecting the floor. An Engel-USA refrigerator/freezer and coolers keep food cold, while a Shurflo pump and Everpure water purification system keep all inhabitants hydrated.

So how do you power all this shit? Juice comes via eight Odyssey batteries with an American Power Systems high-output alternator, Blue Sea ACR smart charge relays and circuit breakers, Renogy solar panels, and Smittybilt generator. The rest of the gear on the truck includes just about everything you can imagine: firearms, rappelling hardware, tools, rations, first-aid, Cascadia rooftop

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SATIN BLACK
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WWW.INTERCOTIRE.COM

1 REFRIGERATOR/FREEZER

MAKE:

Engel

MODEL:

in Tembo Tusk LoadSpotter slide

URL:

www.engelcoolers.com

www.tembotusk.com

2 REAR WINCH

MAKE:

Smittybilt

MODEL:

"Black Box" with Smittybilt X20 12,000-pound winch

URL:

www.smittybilt.com

3 SAFE

MAKE:

Truck Vault

URL:

www.truckvault.com

4 WHITE BOARD

MAKE:

WriteyBoard

URL:

www.writeyboards.com

5 RIFLE

MAKE:

Remington

MODEL:

700P w/Boyd's Laminate stock

URL:

www.remington.com

www.boydsgunstocks.com

6 SHOTGUN

MAKE:

Remington

MODEL:

Vang Comp 870 w/Choate folding stock

URL:

www.vangcomp.com

www.remington.com

www.riflestock.com

7 SHOTGUN

MAKE:

Remington

MODEL:

Vang Comp 870 Magnum w/Ace folding stock

URL:

www.vangcomp.com

www.remington.com

www.riflestock.com

8 RIFLE

MAKE:

Colt carbine upper w/J&J Armory lower

MODEL:

M4 w/ Ace stock

URL:

www.colt.com

www.riflestocks.com



BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE

tent, Miller mig/tig/stick welder, personal lighting, and search-and-rescue and decontamination gear with fixed and removable storage to handle it all. The onboard Viair air compressor, Roto-Pax and EZ-Pack spare fuel containers, Tank Depot water tank, and Hexagon Ragasco propane cylinders will ensure this thing stays self-sufficient for quite a while. Is your head spinning yet?

As before, DeLozier plans to make Survivor Trucks available to the public, be it the Ford Excursion platform or any vehicle that satisfies the requirements of his clientele. Like us, you're probably wondering if he plans on doing yet another version in the future; the answer is yes. Keep your eye out for a covert Survivor Truck on a smaller vehicle to appear sometime in the future. In the meantime, we'll be looking through our medicine cabinet for something to treat the carpal tunnel we're suffering from after typing out everything that's on this truck. ■

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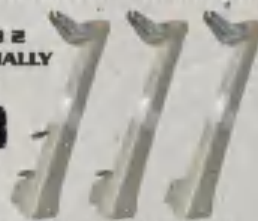
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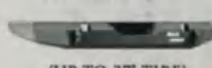
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A-PILLAR LIGHT MOUNTS

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RIGID 20-INCH E-SERIES SHOWN

Defining a gentleman is a breeze — he's a chap who says "please" and "thank you," opens doors for strangers, and walks on the outside of the sidewalk to keep himself between moving traffic and his lady. Defining a gentleman's knife?

That's not as easy.

Knife nuts might argue that it can't have a pocket clip. Some will say it can't have any modern-day accoutrements like assisted opening. Others will still claim that anything goes, so long as it's not too long and doesn't look too gaudy, too tactical, or too outdoorsy.

Needless to say, trying to determine exactly what constitutes a gentleman's knife is much like answering the question, "What's the best handgun?"

Fortunately, most reasonable enthusiasts can agree that a gentleman's knife is any tool that can be carried just as comfortably to a board meeting as it would be to a day at the range.

Like the models gathered on these pages,

blades of this genre function admirably in everyday circumstances, but are attractive to the discerning eye. Not unlike the gentleman himself, however, they remain relatively low key.

1 MAKE:
Benchmade Knife Co.
MODEL:
482
OAL:
5.76 inches
BLADE LENGTH:
2.48 inches
BLADE MATERIAL:
S30V stainless steel
WEIGHT:
1.85 ounces
MSRP:
\$235
URL:
www.benchmade.com

2 MAKE:
Boker USA
MODEL:
Merlin
OAL:
6.88 inches
BLADE LENGTH:
2.88 inches
BLADE MATERIAL:
N690 stainless steel
WEIGHT:
2.9 ounces
MSRP:
\$339
URL:
www.boker.de/us

3 MAKE:
Kershaw Knives
MODEL:
Chill
OAL:
7 inches
BLADE LENGTH:
3.1 inches
BLADE MATERIAL:
8Cr13MoV stainless steel
WEIGHT:
2 ounces
MSRP:
\$36
URL:
www.kershawknives.com

4 MAKE:
Columbia River Knife & Tool
MODEL:
Northcliffe
OAL:
7.56 inches
BLADE LENGTH:
2.95 inches
BLADE MATERIAL:
8Cr13MoV stainless steel
WEIGHT:
3.3 ounces
MSRP:
\$50
URL:
www.crkt.com

5 MAKE:
Gerber
MODEL:
39 Series Micarta
OAL:
7.6 inches
BLADE LENGTH:
3.3 inches
BLADE MATERIAL:
S30V stainless steel
WEIGHT:
3.8 ounces
MSRP:
\$170
URL:
www.gerbargear.com

6 MAKE:
DPx Gear
MODEL:
Aculus 3D
OAL:
7.71 inches
BLADE LENGTH:
3.6 inches
BLADE MATERIAL:
Nilox stainless steel
WEIGHT:
3.7 ounces
MSRP:
\$400
URL:
www.dpxgear.com

7 MAKE:
Spartan Blades
MODEL:
Akribis
OAL:
8.5 inches
BLADE LENGTH:
3.5 inches
BLADE MATERIAL:
S35VN stainless steel
WEIGHT:
5.25 ounces
MSRP:
\$445; \$490 with carbon fiber (shown)
URL:
www.spartanbladesusa.com



FLIP THE PAGE FOR MORE DETAILS ON EACH KNIFE.



9"

8"

7"

6"

5"

4"

3"

2"

1"



INTERROGATING THE UNUSUAL SUSPECTS

BENCHMADE 482



411: Designed by über craftsman Seiichi Nakimura and made with top-notch materials, the 482 is a cool little pocket knife that melds old-school aesthetics with new-school materials — yet is still recognizable as a gentleman's knife. Plus, it has a lanyard hole so you can use it as a keychain or secure it to a bug-out bag or emergency kit.

PROS:

- ▶ The S30V premium steel cuts like a mini light saber while fighting off wear and corrosion.
- ▶ Design features (Nak-Lok locking mechanism, cocobolo wood and carbon-fiber handle scales, etc.) set this apart from the pack.
- ▶ Compact and lightweight.

CONS:

- ▶ This puppy will be too small if you have paws like a mastiff.
- ▶ There's no pocket clip, so check the laws in your area to see if it's legal to keep it buried in your pocket.

BÖKER USA MERLIN



411: It's hard to look at this model and not call it elegant. With its smooth lines and rosewood inset on a polished stainless steel handle, the Merlin looks like it's fit for a Fortune 500 CEO. It operates like a classic gentleman's knife — it has no pocket clip and sports a nail nick instead of a thumb-stud on the blade, requiring a two-handed opening.

PROS:

- ▶ Knife nuts will appreciate the new-school take on its vintage roots.
- ▶ The N690 blade resists stains, holds an edge, and cuts like magic.
- ▶ Quality construction and craftsmanship.

CONS:

- ▶ Traditional design means no thumb-stud or pocket clip, so it can't be relied upon for quick deployment.
- ▶ Fitting that it's called the Merlin, because it'll make your dollar bills (339 of them to be exact) disappear in a single purchase.

KERSHAW KNIVES CHILL



411: This model is the Honda Civic of the bunch: a non-flashy import with limited features that's surprisingly durable for a ridiculously affordable price of \$36. Aesthetically, it's a good-looking, modern take on this genre. It has a contemporary design with a low intimidation factor while honoring the essence of a gentleman's knife.

PROS:

- ▶ Ambidextrous flipper tab works smoothly with an added wrist flick while acting as a finger guard after it's activated.
- ▶ G-10 scales are lightweight, provide a solid grip, and perform in almost all conditions.
- ▶ The Chill is slim and lightweight like a miniature pinscher.

CONS:

- ▶ Too bad it couldn't have been manufactured in the USA for the same price.
- ▶ No thumb-stud or assisted opening means you must perfect the flipper tab opening for a fast draw.

GERBER 39 SERIES MICARTA



411: Made in Portland, the 39 Series Micarta merges quality materials and present-day technologies with fine U.S. knife traditions, resulting in a model that any red-blooded American can appreciate. While it has more of an outdoorsy appearance than others in this guide, it shouldn't draw any gasps or stares if you're roaming the concrete jungle.

PROS:

- ▶ The S30V blade is razor sharp, stain resistant, and crazy strong.
- ▶ Oversized thumb-disc makes opening the blade easy and fast.
- ▶ Liner lock is super strong.

CONS:

- ▶ Pocket clip loops over to the other side of the handle, which some might use as a lanyard hole, but it just looks goofy and unnecessarily extends the length.

CKRT NORTHCLIFFE



411: If this were a pageant, the Northcliffe would win based on its classy looks. Embracing its gentleman's knife roots, it has an ebony wood inset on the stainless steel handle and a drop-point blade with a nail nick instead of a thumb-stud. For a modern touch of safety, there's a small liner lock to ensure the blade stays open once deployed.

PROS:

- ▶ Hits the "gentleman's knife style" right out of the park.
- ▶ Affordable price for those who don't have a CEO paycheck, but want a boardroom-worthy knife.

CONS:

- ▶ Too bad this was built in China instead of the USA: After a few short tests, the blade on our review sample stopped opening up all the way, preventing the liner lock from engaging and the blade from staying locked open.

DPX GEAR ACULUS 3D



411: This DPx Gear knife is like a limited-edition Land Rover: gorgeous, high-powered, and expensive. Limited to 100 units per year, the Aculus 3D has a titanium handle with a unique diamond pattern and a ¼-inch hex base tungsten carbide insert glass-breaker. It's designed by adventurer Robert Young Pelton of *The World's Most Dangerous Places* fame.

PROS:

- ▶ The Niolox blade cuts like a laser and is just as durable and corrosion resistant as other, more common premium stainless steels
- ▶ Made by LionSteel in Italy, the knife features high-quality construction.
- ▶ Everything about this model spells crème de la crème.

CONS:

- ▶ To get a solid grip on a frame-lock, our ring and middle fingers have to squeeze the handle, which pushes the frame-lock onto the blade while we're trying to push it out with our thumb, causing us to fight ourselves.
- ▶ Four C-notes are a significant investment for any tool.

SPARTAN BLADES AKRIBIS



411: Greek for "sharp" and "precise," the Akribis is not only the biggest in this collection, but also the costliest — for good reason. It features carbon-fiber scales on a titanium frame, a S35VN blade with a black SpartaCoat, and Rick Hinderer's Lock Bar Stabilizer. It was designed by Spartan Blades' founders (two former Green Berets) and made in the USA.

PROS:

- ▶ The blade makes short work of anything we throw at it.
- ▶ Fits comfortably in the handle, regardless of grip style.
- ▶ Outstanding craftsmanship and functionality.

CONS:

- ▶ We thought the Aculus 3D was expensive — until we gazed at the Akribis' price tag. Almost \$500? Ouch.



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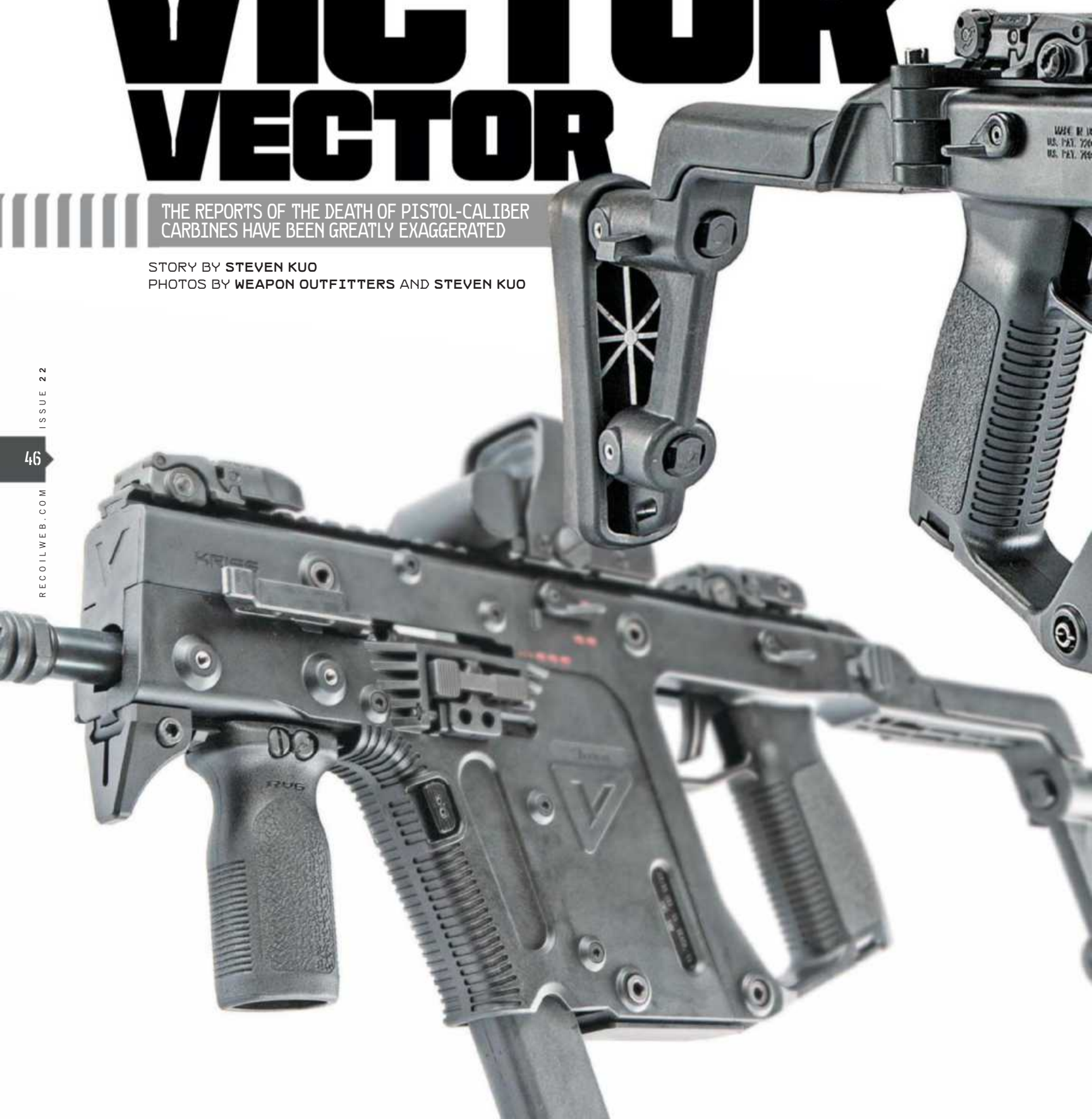
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VICTOR VECTOR

THE REPORTS OF THE DEATH OF PISTOL-CALIBER
CARBINES HAVE BEEN GREATLY EXAGGERATED

STORY BY STEVEN KUO

PHOTOS BY WEAPON OUTFITTERS AND STEVEN KUO





There's been a bit of a renaissance of sorts lately for pistol-caliber carbines, with a number of really interesting new options in 9mm on the market. We've reported on them in previous issues, and now we're bringing you the latest just hitting stores as we speak.

If you're a luddite who doesn't play video games or watch TV or movies, or if you've been hiding in a cavern, you might not have heard of the KRISS Vector sub-machine gun. Featuring space-age looks and a unique operating system designed to mitigate felt recoil, the Vector was launched in .45 ACP. Ever since then, folks have clamored for a 9mm version — and KRISS has finally delivered.

RE-VECTOR REVOLUTION

The heart of the Vector is the KRISS Super V System (KSVS), designed to manage muzzle climb and reduce felt recoil. The delayed blowback Vector fires from a closed bolt. When a shot is fired, the bolt begins to travel to the rear. The Vector's bolt has rear lugs that ride in sloped channels in a slider. They initially offer increased resistance, providing the delay in the delayed blowback action. But rather than traveling straight back, the slider moves diagonally downward, against an action spring behind the magazine, with the bolt also tilting downward off-axis from the bore.

This downward motion ("re-vectoring" according to KRISS, hence the gun's moniker) is intended to keep the gun shooting flat and to mitigate recoil. However, the laws of physics still apply, so there's a secondary recoil impulse when the slider springs back

up and the bolt goes back into battery. Many shooters boast how controllable the Vector is, while some complain about it being jumpy, no doubt from the re-vectoring operating components.

But the unique bolt and slider are just one part of the overall system. The barrel, pressed in a trunion, is positioned low in the chassis, directly in front of the trigger, the web of your hand, and your shoulder. This contributes greatly to the gun's controllability as well.

By simply removing four pins, the upper separates from the lower and releases the bolt group. The upper contains the trigger and hammer mechanism, safety selector, and (if you're fortunate) the firing mode selector. The lower is serialized, and houses the barrel, charging handle, bolt group, magwell, and bolt release. The upper is common across calibers, so you could use the same upper on multiple lowers if you so desired.

The SMG shown here features the optioned original folding stock, hand stop, side Picatinny rail, Magpul RVG, and flash hider.



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As part of the Gen II changes available on both calibers, the new ambidextrous short throw safety selector now boasts just 45 degrees of travel between positions, rather than 120 degrees, and the trigger has been revised to a pivoting design. The original folding stock has been replaced with an M4 stock adapter with a collapsible Defiance buttstock, but the old one is still available as an accessory. The guns come with a full-length top Picatinny rail, a lower rail, sling point attachments, and Magpul MBUS front and rear sights. For those working out their noise-reduction plans, the barrel is threaded $\frac{1}{2} \times 28$ RH.

The Vector is available in several configurations for civilians: the CRB carbine with a 16-inch barrel, the SBR

short-barreled rifle version with a 5.5-inch barrel, and the SDP pistol which dispenses with the buttstock assembly. Law enforcement and military customers can opt for the select fire SMG model.

The big news for those who have been coveting a Vector is that KRISS is lowering prices for 2016, with the SDP to retail at \$1,249 and the CRB and SBR at \$1,399. An upgraded CRB Enhanced variant retails at \$1,599 and comes with the enhanced barrel shroud shown here, a hand stop, side Picatinny rail, Magpul RVG, and combat gray Cerakote. A Cerakote upgrade in flat dark earth, OD green, and alpine white for any of the models costs an additional \$100. When asked, KRISS told us there were no plans for a .40 S&W version.

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9MM FTW

The .45 ACP Vector has always been a cool subgun, but in 9mm the KRISS Vector really shines. We greatly enjoyed running it through its paces.

While the 9mm lower looks the same as the .45 ACP lower, the parts are redesigned for the smaller cartridge. Like the original, the 9mm Vector uses ubiquitous Glock magazines, accepting Glock 17 mags and the wide variety of extended base pads available on the market. KRISS advised that in their testing, Glock OEM magazines run perfectly, and Magpul's original Glock PMAGs were fine, but they hadn't gotten the revised ones to test. One-hundred-round BETA MAGS work well, but Korean knockoffs were not reliable.

The new pivoting trigger broke at 4.25 pounds on our Lyman trigger pull gauge. It's no 1911, but the trigger was better than we expected — it was pretty smooth and clean, and you could feel the reset. We didn't get a chance to really put the Vector's precision to the test, but at 25 yards with an EOTech off a bench, we achieved five-shot groups of 4.6 MOA with 115-grain FMJ in the CRB.

At first, the Vector feels a bit odd in hand. But you get used to it. Your firing hand feels quite high, relative to the bore, and your support hand has less purchase on the tall front housing to drive the gun as you might like, especially for those who have become accustomed to yanking their AR handguards around like a teenage boy on the Internet. Settling behind the gun is quite comfortable, and the Vector points intuitively and transitions between targets effortlessly. The ambidextrous short throw safety falls naturally under your thumb, while the firing mode selector is isolated like Cuba in the middle of the upper, out of reach of either hand (though this won't be a consideration for civilian

The safety and firing mode selector are ambidextrous, but the bolt release, magazine release, and charging handle are not.



The fun switch. Everyone needs to spend some time rocking and rolling with the 9mm Vector. Two-shot bursts at 1,150 rpm in 9mm are something else.





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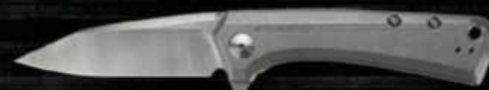
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0450



0808



0900



➤ As you might expect, the SBR/SMG version of the Vector is very handy in tight spaces and handles very nicely.



◀ In full auto, the Vector converts money into brass at a startling and grin-inducing rate. It's very controllable.



shooters). The downside of using Glock mags is the location of the magazine release on the front of the magwell, which takes some practice to work out efficient magazine changes on the clock — we used the support hand thumb. The charging handle works great for right-handed shooters, and much less than great for wrong-handed shooters. Same for the bolt release, located on the left side of the gun. Locking the bolt back also seemed to be an exercise well suited for mutant humanoids who have the benefit of a third hand.

All that being said, pressing the trigger on the Vector makes everything

good in the world. Especially the full-auto SMG version. The combination of the 9mm round, the KSVS system which spreads the recoil impulse out over time, and the low bore axis made for an unbelievably soft-shooting gun that was easily controlled in rapid (or full-auto) fire. It was an absolute joy to shoot and got passed around to a bunch of giddy shooters at the range like a bong at Burning Man. The SMG has three firing modes: semi-automatic, two-shot burst, and fully automatic. There's an auto sear that always engages as well as semi-auto and burst disconnectors that engage depending on the position of the selector. With a



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REPLAY XD DAY AT THE RANGE

We got the opportunity to shake out the new KRISS Vector at Replay XD's Day at the Range event, hosted by 295 Tactical in Eugene, Oregon. Replay XD brought together a number of companies and individuals to check out new products and go hot with them. We coordinated with KRISS for them to bring out prototypes of their new 9mm Vector to the event for us to review and for other shooters to try out.

Replay XD makes the Prime X, a point-of-view action video camera system. While the most well known POV camera is shaped like a stack of Post-It notes in a glistening clear plastic case, the Replay XD cameras are black anodized aluminum cylinders, like a small tactical flashlight. And which would you rather have perched on your firearm or helmet? The Replay XD's form factor lends itself exceedingly well to shooting applications. In fact, our own HMFIC Iain Harrison took a bunch with him on his Alaskan hunt — stay tuned for more on that.

Moreover, Replay XD is demonstrating its commitment to the shooting, tactical, and hunting communities with its open and wholehearted support for our needs and requirements. Their executive ranks include prior service members and real shooters, and we know this matters to our readership. There are two important ways that you can support those who support your rights. One is to vote at the ballot box, and the other is to vote with your wallet.

Check out exclusive videos of the KRISS Vector and the Replay XD event at www.recoilweb.com/video.

cyclic rate of 1,100 to 1,200 rounds per minute, the Vector burns through a magazine awful quick. But with careful application of the trigger finger, you can output controlled bursts quite well. With such a high cyclic rate and controllable recoil impulse, we were ringing steel at 25 yards in two-shot burst mode with boring regularity. You do have to be mindful of the hefty height over bore of the sights on close targets.

We expended cases of ammo over several days, running drills with shooters of varying levels of experience. The reaction was universally positive. Experienced shooters were able to keep rounds on paper at 10 yards in full auto. One petite female shooter found the .45 ACP too harsh for her taste, but loved the 9mm Vector.

The CRB carbine ran like a sewing machine the whole time. The SMG

prototype started experiencing double feeds — upon closer inspection we discovered a loose ejector. The KRISS engineers on hand identified it as an earlier prototype part that hadn't been replaced with the latest, as on the CRB. So with typical at-the-range ingenuity, they banged and clawed at it for a while until it was no longer loose so we could resume depleting their ammo. And that we did. A lot.

As shooters, we now have an embarrassment of riches, with more great choices of 9mm carbines and subguns than ever. The new incarnation of the KRISS Vector should definitely be on your short list to check out. It offers a package of unique features — at a new, lower price. Just try shooting one...and see if you can resist pulling out your wallet. ■

SPEC BOX

KRISS USA CRB / SBR / SDP



CALIBER 9mm	 URL www.kriss-usa.com
BARREL LENGTH 16 inches / 5.5 inches	
OVERALL LENGTH 35 to 38.5 inches / 24.5 to 28 inches / 16.75 inches	ACCESSORIES (SBR) Eotech XPS2 \$539 Original stock \$79 Picatinny side rail \$27 Hand stop \$30 Magpul RVG \$25 Flash hider \$15
WEIGHT (UNLOADED) 7.6 pounds / 6.8 pounds / 5.9 pounds	ACCESSORIES (CRB) Enhanced barrel shroud \$130 Eotech 512 \$459
MAGAZINE CAPACITY 17 and 33 rounds (Glock G17 magazines)	PRICE AS SHOWN (CRB) \$1,988
MSRP \$1,399 / \$1,399 / \$1,249	PRICE AS SHOWN (CRB) \$2,114

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A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE TARGET

JUST BECAUSE YOU MISSED
DOESN'T MEAN YOU SUCK

STORY BY RYAN CLECKNER
PHOTOS BY CHRIS WHITE

You zeroed your rifle and gathered data out to 1,000 yards on a range in Austin, Texas. You just tried using that data in Flagstaff, Arizona, and it didn't work. You missed the target, and you can't figure out why.

Why did you miss? Simply put, there are external variables that can affect the bullet's path on the way to the target. If you don't understand the effect these variables have and compensate for them, you might just keep missing. The theory and technique of precision shooting is often explained in an overcomplicated way. It's true that the subject is complex and can take a lifetime to master. However, this article is an attempt to explain the external effects on a bullet in flight in a simple way that shows how they're related. This isn't an advanced course; it's merely an introduction.





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For all of the examples in this article, we'll use a 175-grain Sierra HPBT bullet fired from a .308 Winchester rifle. You probably have one lurking in the safe, and most people cut their teeth in the long-range game on the good ol' 7.62 NATO.

BOTTOM LINE UP FRONT

There are really only two external forces that change a bullet's path on the way to the target, namely gravity and wind. There — you've just gotten all you need to know on the subject. Well done, carry on.

Seriously though, if you keep this in mind throughout any discussion of long-range ballistics, you'll have a better grasp of why any factor might influence your bullet. It all comes back to gravity and wind.

Both gravity and wind have a greater effect on a bullet the longer the bullet is in flight. Therefore, anything that makes it take longer for the bullet to reach a target will allow gravity to cause the bullet to drop more. It will

also allow wind to blow the bullet off of its original path more.

It isn't just the target's distance and the bullet's initial speed that determine the flight time of a bullet. Environmental variables, such as air pressure, temperature, and humidity, as well as the bullet's efficiency, can also change how long it takes for a bullet to reach a target. Bullets start to slow down the moment they leave the barrel because of aerodynamic drag. Increased drag, or wind-resistance, means that it'll take longer for a bullet to reach a target, and therefore it can be affected more by gravity and wind. It's important to note that any particular value for these variables doesn't change the path. Instead, a change from one value to another is what has an effect.

Also, don't mistake a bullet's speed with a bullet's accuracy. Just because a bullet gets to the target faster does not mean it's necessarily more accurate — it only means that it's exposed to gravity and wind for less time. For

example, let's say we have a .308 Winchester rifle with an 18-inch barrel that's very accurate. Because of the short barrel, however, bullets leave the rifle at a slower speed than they would leave a 24-inch barrel. This means that gravity has a longer time span to affect its bullets, and we have to adjust up more for a particular distance target. Even though our bullets drop more, they're still very accurate.

ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

Environmental variables affect the air's density. Denser air causes more drag on a bullet. Decreased temperature or increased air pressure results in denser air.

Air pressure (not necessarily altitude) can change the air's density. It is true that higher altitudes generally have less dense air. Weather conditions, however, can change the air pressure at the same altitude and can cause the same air pressure at different altitudes. Therefore, a measure of the actual air pressure is more important than how

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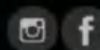
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high you are up a hill.

“Station pressure” is the true air pressure at a particular location and altitude. “Barometric pressure,” on the other hand, is a measurement of the air pressure that has been corrected as if the measurement location were at sea level. Barometric pressure is useful when comparing weather conditions in weather reports — station pressure is useful when you are trying to determine the air’s density because it’s a value that doesn’t need to be corrected for altitude. To convert from barometric to station pressure, subtract about 1 inch of pressure for every 1,000 feet of elevation.

Of the three environmental factors discussed in this article, air pressure has the greatest effect on air density. For example, the change from a higher station pressure of 30 inches of mercury in Austin to a lower station pressure of 24 inches of mercury in Flagstaff will cause a bullet to impact over 50 inches higher at 1,000 yards because it is getting to the target faster in the thinner (less-dense) air.



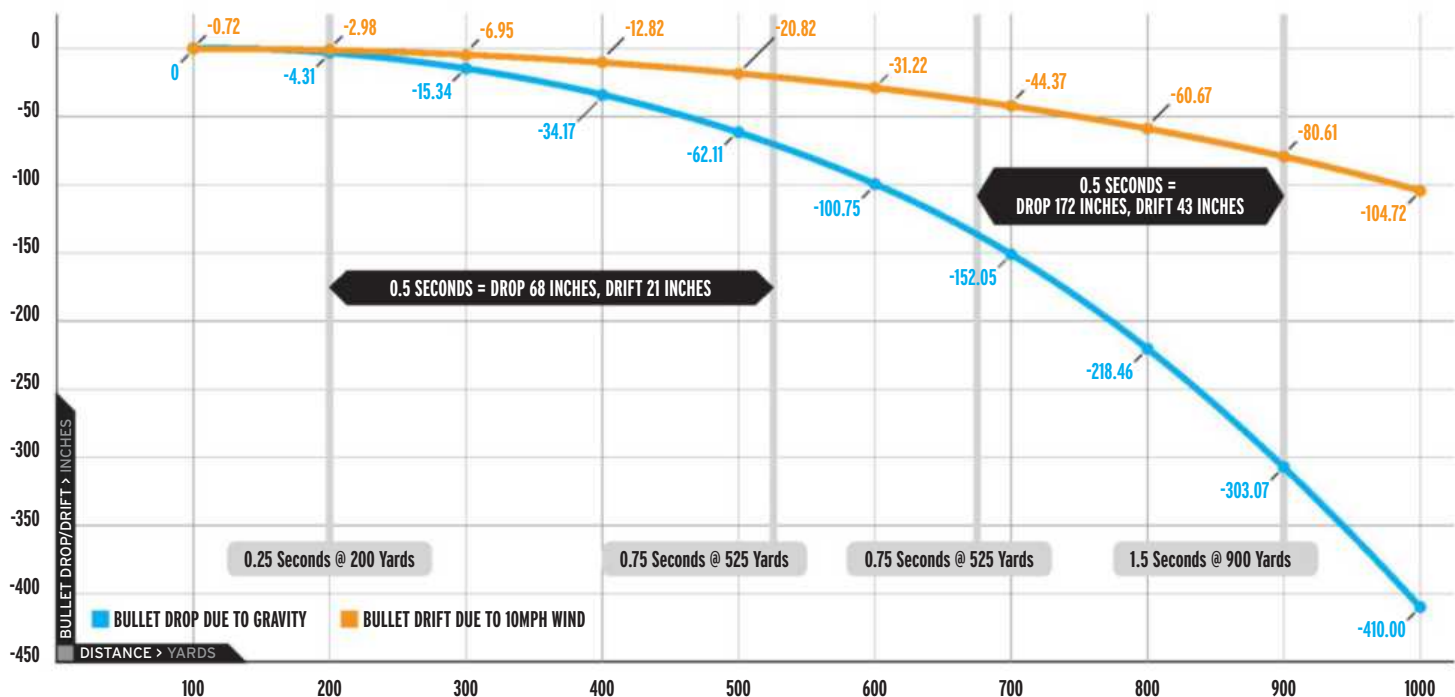
Author shooting at Strategic Edge Gun Range in Chapel Hill, Tennessee.

Air temperature can also change the air’s density. Warmer air is less dense. Therefore, higher temperatures result in shorter bullet flight times because of reduced drag. Higher temperatures may also result in faster bullets because gunpowder in a hotter cartridge generally burns faster and produces higher initial bullet velocities. Despite how some powders are marketed, all powders are affected by temperature — some just more so than others. All of this means that both the ammunition’s temperature and the ambient air temperature matter.

For example, leaving ammunition out in the sun or in a hot chamber can increase the temperature of the cartridge, even if the ambient air temperature hasn’t changed.

A change from 110 degrees Fahrenheit in Austin to 30 degrees in Flagstaff can cause the bullet to drop 35 more inches at 1,000 yards because it travels slower through the denser air.

The effects from temperature and air pressure can partially cancel each other out. At higher altitudes, both the air pressure and the temperature





G-CODE

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BULLET DROP @ 1000 YARDS

STARTING INFO:

- > 175 gr. (0.505 G1 B.C.)
- > 59° F
- > 0% Humidity
- > 30 inHg

● 24 inHg > -351 in. (59 in. high)

● 110° F > -388 in. (22 in. high)

100% Humidity > -407 in. (3 in. high)

● **-410 in.**

● 30° F > -425 in. (15 in. low)

● 168 gr. (0.462 B.C.) > -456 in. (46 in. low)

are often lower than at lower altitudes. In the examples above, the lower air pressure causes the bullet to strike about 50 inches high and the lower temperature causes the bullet to strike about 35 inches low. If both the lower air pressure and the lower temperature happened at the same time, then the net effect to the bullet would only be about 15 inches high (the difference between 50 inches up and 35 inches down).

Despite most people's intuition, air density actually decreases as humidity increases. As crazy as it sounds, the more moisture there is in the air, the less dense the air is. Therefore, an increase in humidity will result in a faster bullet and a decrease in humidity will result in a slower bullet. Of the environmental factors, a change in humidity has the least effect. For example, a change in humidity from 100 percent to zero would cause a bullet to impact only about 3 inches lower at 1,000 yards, so there's really no need to obsess over it.

HIGH SPEED, LOW DRAG

The efficiency of a bullet has a direct impact on its aerodynamic drag. A more efficient bullet passes through the air easier and can get to the target faster. A bullet's ability to efficiently move through the air is measured by its Ballistic Coefficient (BC). At its simplest level, the BC of a bullet is calculated by a mathematical model based off of a bullet's density, which is a ratio of a bullet's mass and its cross-sectional area, and its particular shape. The higher the BC, the less drag on the bullet.

For example, a Sierra 175-grain HPBT bullet has a listed B.C. of 0.505. If we changed the bullet to a lighter Sierra 168-grain HPBT with a listed B.C. of 0.462, then it will drop 46 inches more at 1,000 yards because it is less efficient and therefore

takes longer to reach the target. Even if both bullets leave the rifle at 2,600 feet per second, the more efficient bullet will be traveling over 100 feet per second faster at 1,000 yards.

SPIN DRIFT AND THE CORIOLIS EFFECT

In addition to the forces and variables discussed above, there are two other things worth mentioning that can change the impact location of a bullet: spin drift and the Coriolis effect. Spin drift is the changing of a bullet's path due to the rotation of the bullet. On a rifle with a right-hand twist barrel (the vast majority of rifles), the bullet will drift to the right.

In our example, our Sierra .308 Win. bullet will drift about 5 inches right at 800 yards and 10 inches right at 1,000 yards. This is not a variable that changes — it happens every time, but it does vary between different bullet designs.

Contrary to popular belief, the Coriolis effect is not about the target moving with the surface of the Earth as it rotates below a bullet in flight. Although the rotation of the Earth causes the effect, the deflection of a bullet off of its original course is a consequence of inertia and centrifugal forces. Horizontal changes due to Coriolis depend on your latitude and not on the direction you are shooting. Bullets will always drift to the right in the Northern hemisphere and to the left in the Southern hemisphere. The horizontal effect is greater the further you are from the equator and closer you are to the poles.

For example, if you were shooting in Mexico at 20 degrees North latitude, your bullet will drift about 1.5 inches to the right at 1,000 yards. If you were shooting in Alaska at 65 degrees North latitude, your bullet will drift about 4 inches to the right at 1,000 yards. Remember, these shifts will happen

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regardless of the direction you're shooting.

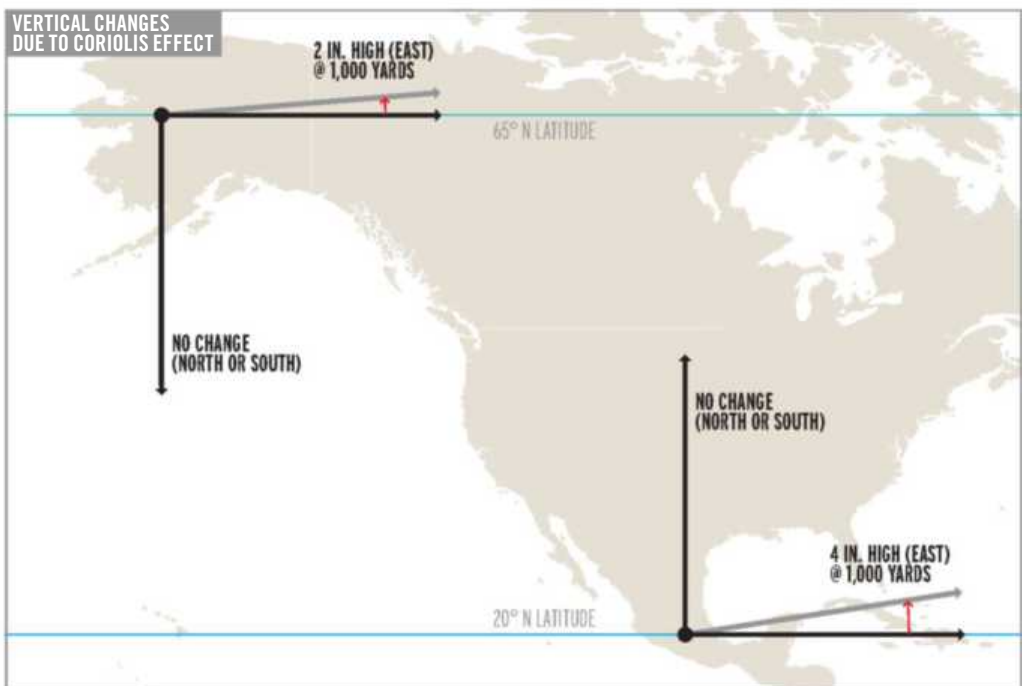
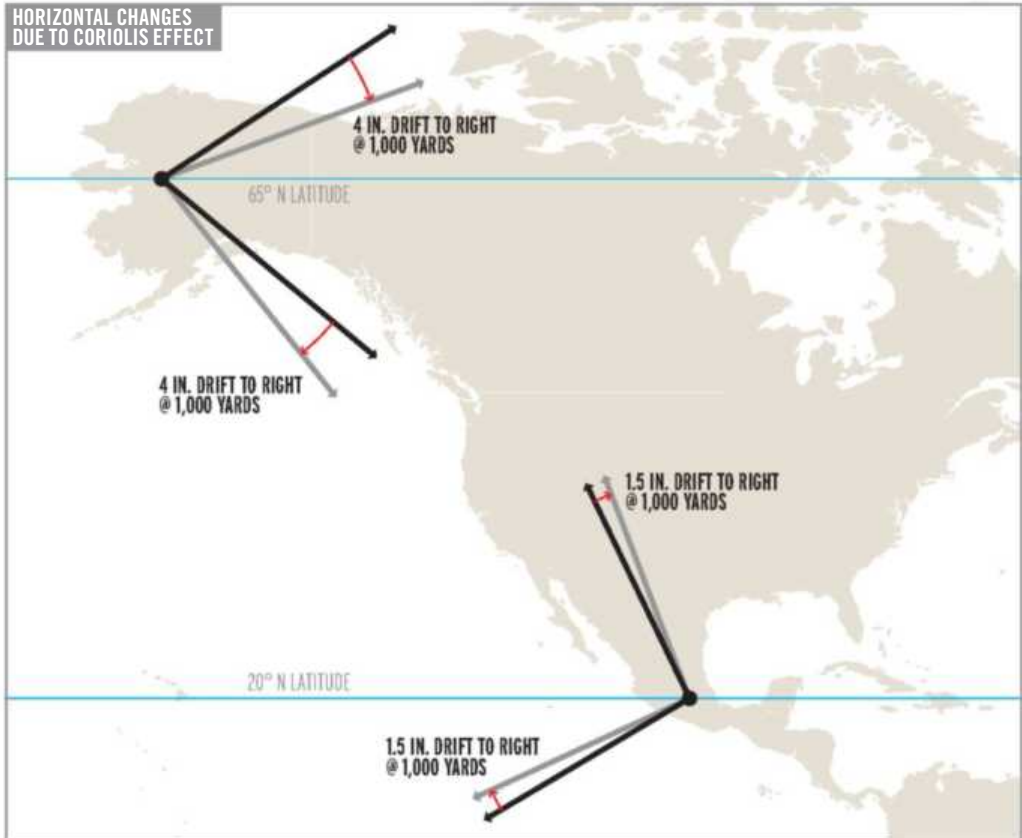
The vertical component to Coriolis, unlike the horizontal changes described above, is greatest at the equator and it changes depending on which direction you are shooting. Shooting directly north or south results in no vertical change. When shooting east with the rotation of the Earth, however, your bullet will impact high and when shooting west your bullet will impact low.

For example, shooting east in Mexico at 20 degrees north latitude will cause the bullet to impact the target about 4 inches high at 1,000 yards. If you were shooting east in Alaska at 65 degrees north latitude, the bullet will only impact about 2 inches high.

In the Northern hemisphere, spin drift and the horizontal component of the Coriolis effect add to each other. In the examples above, the bullet will drift 10 inches right because of spin drift and about 4 inches right in Alaska because of Coriolis effect for a total of 14 inches to the right. This is, of course, without even considering the wind, which is *by far* the biggest horizontal influence on a bullet and one that deserves its own article.

HOW MUCH DOES THIS REALLY MATTER?

The short answer is, it depends. If you can't hit a bull's ass with a banjo, then any discussion about external ballistics is pretty academic. First, master proper shooting fundamentals like position and trigger control. Next, worry about gravity and wind's effect on your bullet. Only after you have a good handle on the basics should you start to worry about these other external effects. Clearly, they matter and can cause you to miss when you've done everything else right. However, if you get too wrapped around the details, you might just skip having a proper foundation first. ■



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ryan Cleckner is a former sniper team leader in the U.S. Army's 1st Ranger Battalion and sniper instructor. Cleckner, who is currently a firearms industry executive, attorney, and university lecturer, has a passion for teaching and explaining seemingly complex topics in a way that anyone can understand. He has appeared as a sniper expert on History Channel's *Top Shot* program, has a series of popular online firearm instructional videos, and is the author of the *Long Range Shooting Handbook*. Learn more about him at RyanCleckner.com and NorthShadow.com.



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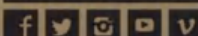
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CMMG'S MK9 PDW IS BOTH VERSATILE AND FUN TO SHOOT

STORY BY **TOM MARSHALL**
PHOTOS BY **KENDA LENSEIGNE**

We've always been a little skeptical of AR pistols. They're too big to really work like pistols and, thanks to the NFA, will always fall short of their potential as rifles — unless you're willing and able to get a tax stamp. So when CMMG's Mk9 PDW arrived we weren't quite sure what we were going to say about it. Then we shot it.

Back when this gun was originally launched, all was good in the land of stabilizing arm braces. Everyone knew what they were supposed to do, as well as what they *could* do, and the ATF treated everyone like adults and left well enough alone. That delicate balance was thrown into upheaval and at this point, it's kind of irrelevant whether you want to blame the pencil-pushers in West Virginia or the tidal wave of mother-may-I letters sent by gun owners trying to prove a point. What matters is how we proceed from here. For many shooters, their SB-15-equipped pistols will now become safe queens. Others, who had previously been on the fence about buying a weapon pre-equipped with an arm brace, will likely throw up their hands and put their pennies toward some other purchase.

We bring this up because even though we had a chance to equip the Mk9 with an arm brace and shoot it from any position we damn well pleased, we didn't. In retrospect, we're kinda glad for this as it demonstrated that rifle-pattern pistols don't have to be abandoned wholesale just because of some bureaucratic bickering over accessories.





PDW uses Colt pattern mags and ejector, but employs a dedicated lower with pinned feed ramp, rather than a drop in adapter block. The stock trigger was OK, but we figured we'd drop in this Hyperfire for a later range session.

NUTS AND BOLTS

The Mk9 is CMMG's entry into the pistol-caliber AR market. It's available as a factory SBR, but the more easily accessible version is the pistol variant. The only difference between the two is whether it ships with a buttstock or a pistol buffer tube. The Mk9 pistol sports an 8.5-inch nitride-treated barrel made from 4140 chromoly steel. Said barrel is sheathed in a 7-inch KeyMod handguard with a continuous top rail. The pistol grip and trigger guard are of Magpul's ubiquitous MOE line. All controls and small parts (trigger, fire control selector, charging handle, etc.) appear to be factory standard. The muzzle device is an A2-style bird-cage. The one included magazine is a 32-round "stick" magazine patterned off the old Colt SMG mags. While the Mk9 only comes with one magazine, spares are available on the CMMG website at a wallet-friendly \$20.

Our test gun was not equipped with any sights, so we used that long top rail to try out a few red dot optics,

such as an Aimpoint Micro, an EO-Tech, and the Hi-Lux Micro Max B-dot seen elsewhere in this issue.

CMMG was wise enough to use a receiver endplate that has small sling loops, like dog ears, on either side of the buffer tube. The awesome folks at Echo93 sent along one of their two-point Seat Belt Slings, which was attached right quick. As the name implies, these are simple two-point slings with an HK-style CLASH hook (or QD swivel) at each end that are made out of seatbelt webbing. The seatbelt webbing provides a wide, comfortable sling that's also particularly low friction when compared to similar designs of webbed cotton or lower-grade nylon webbing.

By snapping both CLASH hooks into one sling loop, we were able to create an ad hoc, single-point sling which was

then looped over the firing arm and head. We then pushed the gun to full extension. This creates isometric tension on the weapon and, thus, a surprisingly stable shooting platform without touching any part of the weapon against your shoulder. If you dig around long enough on the interwebs, you may find some old file photos of British SAS or Navy SEAL teams using this technique, particularly when shooting their stubby Heckler & Koch MP5K machine pistol. While MP5Ks and sling-tension-shooting are now both considered tactical vintage, we highly recommend the technique as an effective method that (as of now) does not constitute a redesign of your pistol in Uncle Sam's eyes.





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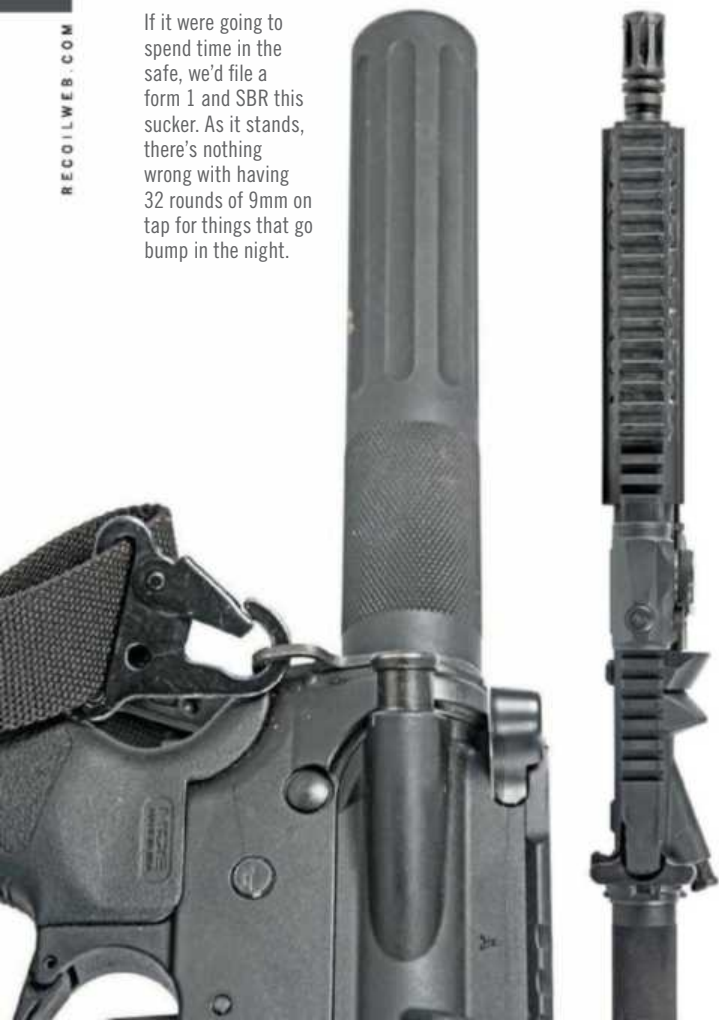
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If it were going to spend time in the safe, we'd file a form 1 and SBR this sucker. As it stands, there's nothing wrong with having 32 rounds of 9mm on tap for things that go bump in the night.



ROUNDS DOWNRANGE

Exactly how effective is it? Honestly, more so than we expected. We did the majority of our testing with 115-grain Winchester White Box FMJ ammo. With this load we were able to achieve one-ragged-hole groups at 7 yards when we slowed down and focused. Moving back to 15 yards, the groups opened up to about 3 inches, give or take. Even at the 15 yards, most of the strings could be covered with a handprint, and beyond this distance the groups began to look more like a buckshot pattern. With more time and more ammo we might have done better, but 15 yards in a straight line covers any room in most houses. Multiple target drills were also easy. We had clean, A-box hits out from that same 15-yard line. Shooting the Mk9 from sling tension may not be the ideal home defense option, but it's a viable one, especially when you pair a red

dot with a KeyMod weapon light. The trigger on the test gun was pretty nice for a stock unit. The stacking was soft and consistent with a sharp, snappy reset. It certainly made our grouping exercises easier.

Be advised — if you do choose to shoot off the sling, the recoil impulse will feel different. We shot the Mk9 a couple times with no sling, just holding it like an oversized version of our CCW Glock and the muzzle bucked upwards like most pistols. When using the sling, the muzzle doesn't flip quite the same way, nor does the recoil come straight back like a conventional long gun. Instead, the weapon sort of ... teeter-totters like a rocking chair. The muzzle rises then, almost immediately, dips down below the point of aim before bobbing back up to where you want it. It didn't seem to affect accuracy, at least not at short range, but it took a little getting used to. It makes sense

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If you look closely, you'll notice that this CMMG hasn't been babied or gussied up for its photo shoot. A few months of range sessions and the occasional competition have taken their toll on its Type III anodizing.

when you think about the configuration. A metal hook (the sling) running through a metal loop (the end plate) is not a rigid connection. Regardless of how much tension you put on it, it's a pivot point. So at the peak of the recoil impulse, the buffer and part of the bolt carrier are both compressed behind that pivot point. When the buffer spring does its job, most of that weight gets flung forward toward, or past, said pivot point hence the seesaw effect. Newton was right.

In addition to the FMJ, we ran several different JHP rounds through

the Mk9: Federal 147-grain Hydra-Shok, Hornady 124-grain XTP, and Winchester 124-grain +P PDX, to be specific. Feed and function was very good, overall. There were a couple of nose-out stovepipes, which we're pretty sure were magazine related, and the gun wasn't partial to any one kind of ammo. When a stoppage did occur, we removed the magazine and checked the top round. Each time, that round was wiggling around on the feed lips like a loose tooth. The solution we came up with was to give each fresh mag a couple light taps along

the spine to seat the rounds before sending it up the magwell. When we started doing this consistently, we stopped having feed problems.

We put this gun into the hands of seven different shooters. Each one got a quick demonstration of proper sling tension and was promptly sent on their way. And every single one of those people gave the Mk9 back with a big grin on their face. Paired with a sling and a red-dot this thing is an absolute joy to shoot. Recoil is soft and the learning curve is short. A quality single-point sling and about 45 seconds of practice will have you burning through boxes of ammo in no time. It can easily be pressed into service as a home defense weapon. You can also toss it in the bottom of your toolbox with a couple of magazines and leave it in your truck. Or just use it to make new friends on the range.

The Mk9 PDW has factory price tag of \$1,100 and, as always, is backed by CMMG's lifetime quality guarantee. If 9mm is not your flavor of choice, it's also available in .22LR and .300 Blackout. With or without an arm brace, the Mk9 is cheap to shoot, fast, fun, and functional. It may just be the AR pistol you didn't know you wanted. ■

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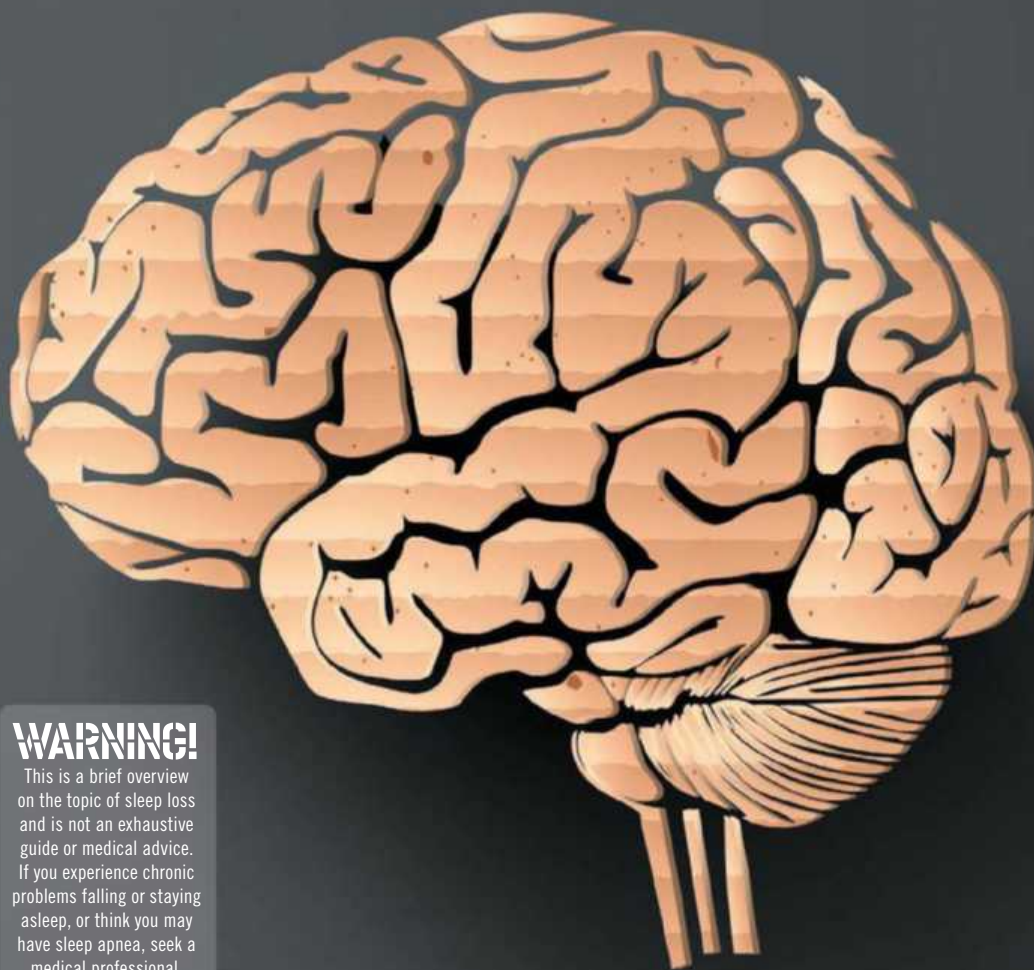
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COUNTING SHEEP AND SPLIT TIMES

A DEVASTATING CONSEQUENCE
OF SLEEP LOSS IS THAT PEOPLE
DON'T NOTICE THEIR DECREASE
IN PERFORMANCE

STORY AND PHOTOS BY DR. NEAL H. OLSHAN



WARNING!

This is a brief overview on the topic of sleep loss and is not an exhaustive guide or medical advice. If you experience chronic problems falling or staying asleep, or think you may have sleep apnea, seek a medical professional.

It was noon on Main Street, Bisbee, Arizona. The year was 1873. What had started as a two-day high-stakes poker tournament in the Lady Luck Saloon the evening before had escalated into claims of cheating and the challenge of a gunfight between the finalists. Now the two men stood facing each other with hands hovering nervously over the butts of their pistols, waiting for that crucial moment, unaware of any onlookers — for their world had shrunk to a 30-foot-long rectangle of rutted dirt street.

The man with no hat had come from Yuma and slept so little in the past three days that he could no longer stifle a yawn. As his mouth opened, the other man drew his Colt 1851 Navy and fired twice. When the black powder smoke cleared, that yawn had cost him his life. The next day's newspaper headline read, "Yuma Yawner Catches Bullet." Fiction? Maybe. But the man's physiological disadvantage isn't that far from the truth.

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What do the following disasters have in common?

- ▶ The 1979 Three Mile Island nuclear accident
- ▶ The 1986 Challenger space shuttle disaster
- ▶ The 1986 Chernobyl nuclear accident
- ▶ The 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill off the Alaskan coast
- ▶ The February 2009 crash of Colgan Air flight 3407 that killed 50 people

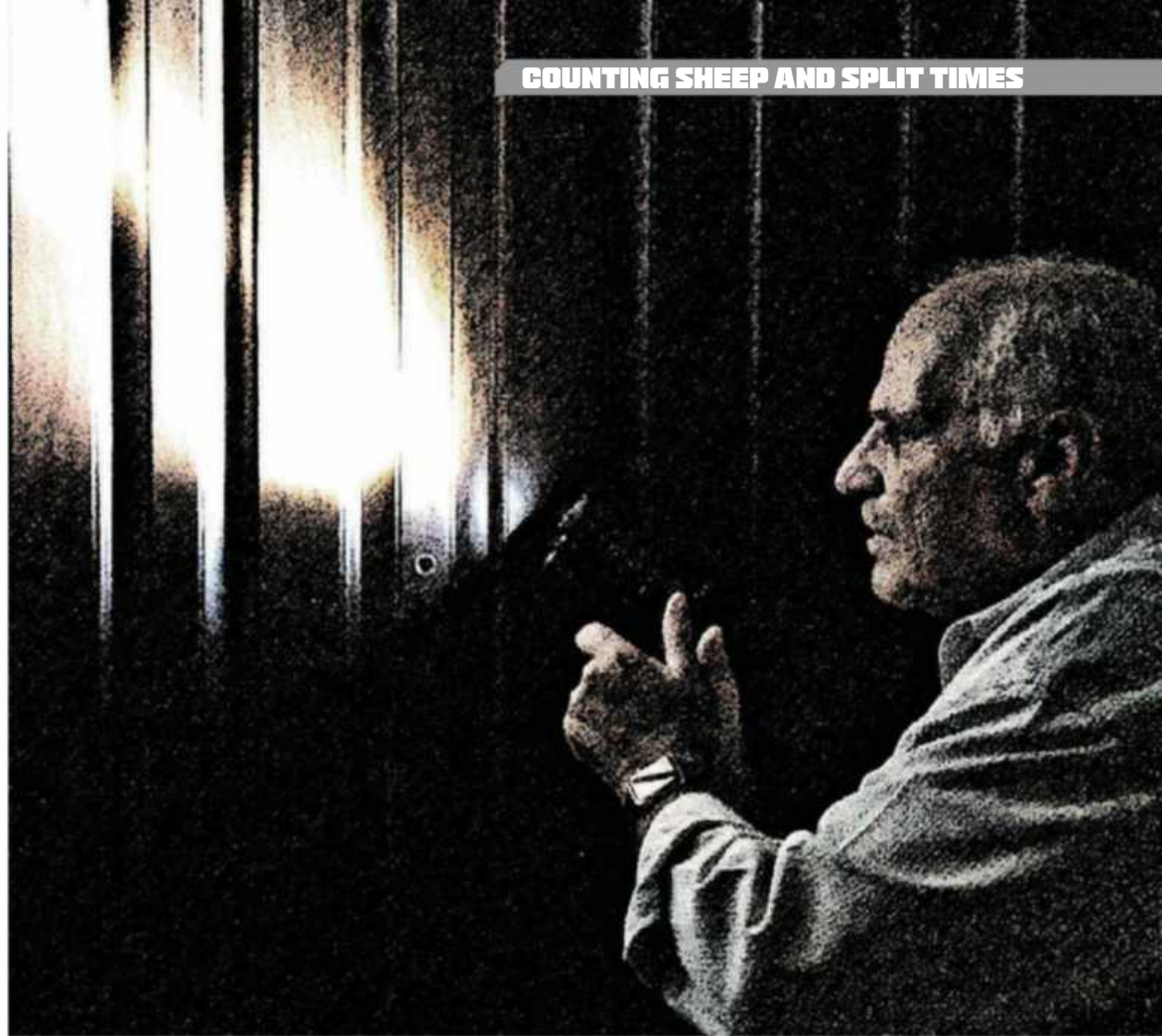
Sleep loss was found to be at least a contributing factor in each disaster.

THE GREAT SLEEP MYTH

A short quiz: what takes up 24 years of our lives? It's the one thing that helps to sustain us. The obvious answer — obvious if you didn't fall asleep during the first few paragraphs of this column — is sleep. For something all of us do for such a significant portion of our lifetime, most people know very little about slumber. All of us have heard business leaders state, "I got to be the CEO of my company by sleeping only four hours a night." Or some people say that sleeping is a waste of time while others comment that, "Only babies and little kids need lots of sleep." Wrong, wrong, and wrong.

So what's sleep deprivation? Essentially, it's an inadequate amount of sleep time. The definition is simple, but the results can be devastating. Snoozing only five or six hours a night for multiple days in a row will magnify cognitive deficits.

The negative physical and cognitive effects are validated by thousands of proven and replicated scientific studies. Sleep loss may affect each individual differently, depending on such factors as medication intake (prescription and over the counter), physical conditioning, medical conditions, and psychological functioning. But your ability to perceive vital information could be diminished — e.g. is that



object in front of you on the freeway a garbage bag or a blown tire). Not to mention running and gunning at peak performance at a three-gun competition or determining if that silhouette in your darkened living room is a burglar or just your teenage son coming home late.

How Much Sleep Do We Need:

While everyone is different, generally speaking most people should get the following amount of hours of slumber, based on their ages:

- ▶ Teenagers (14 to 17): Eight to 10 hours
- ▶ Adults (18 to 64): Seven to nine hours
- ▶ Older adults (65-plus): Seven to eight hours

THE PHYSIOLOGY OF SLEEP

Stage I (4 to 5 percent of total sleep): Light sleep, eyes move slowly, muscle activity slows.

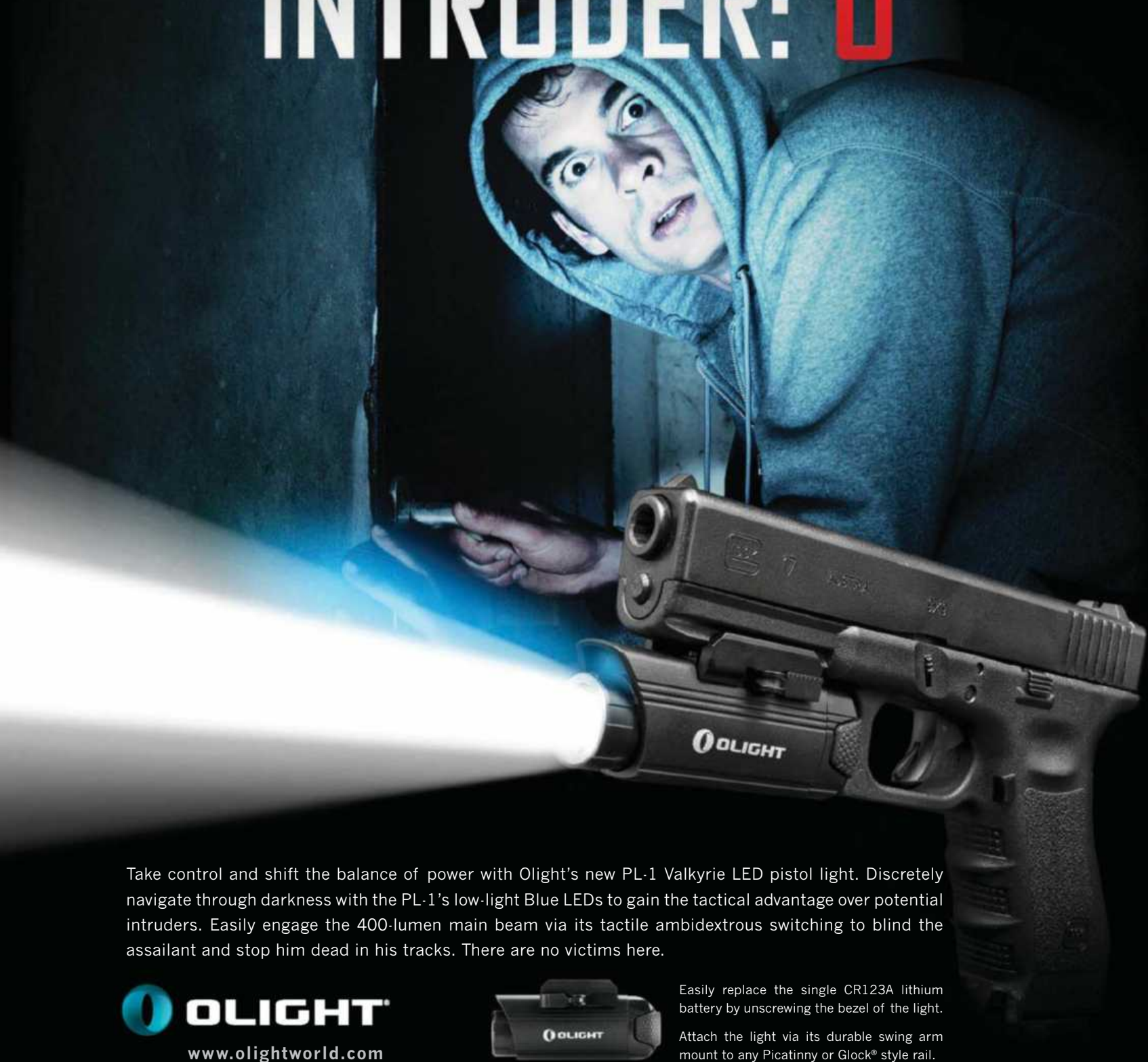
Stages II and III (45 to 55 percent of total sleep): Eye movement stops

and brain waves become slower. This is part of the deep-sleep stage. It's hard to rouse you during this stage, and if someone woke you up, you would feel disoriented for a few minutes.

Stage IV (12 to 15 percent of total sleep): The brain produces Delta waves almost exclusively. It's very difficult to wake someone during stages three and four, which together are called deep sleep. There's no eye movement or muscle activity. People awakened from a deep sleep do not adjust immediately and often feel groggy and disoriented for several minutes.

Stage V (20 to 25 percent of total sleep time): This stage involves REM (rapid eye movement). When people awaken during REM sleep, they often describe bizarre and illogical dreams. During the deep stages and REM sleep, the body repairs and regrows tissues, builds bone and muscle, and strengthens the immune system.

YOU: 1 INTRUDER: 0



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need to forget the magazine and refocus on the target — forget the mistake. Although you lost a second or two, your cognitive functioning is back online.

The above scenario is a prime example of what happens when you get the right amount of sleep — not too little, not too much. You maintain mind-body unity, can rebound quickly from minor errors, and operate both mentally and physically at peak levels. If you've been practicing, your aim will stay true, your endurance will keep you going, and you'll be able to make good decisions on the fly.

A PERFORMANCE KILLER

The carbine class was well underway and it was your turn to display the skills that had been taught all morning. As the instructor called out the numbers of the targets, it was your task to place two rounds in each target. Everything was going well until your foot hit a rock when you moved to your left and you stumbled. Once you regained your balance, you quickly realized that you were one target behind.

In an effort to catch up, you fired too quickly and missed the target completely. Swearing under your breath, you realize that your movements had gone from smooth to jerky with a string of poor shots, and everything goes from bad to worse. If you're going to have a weapon in your hand, no matter for what reason, lack of a consistent sleep pattern will adversely affect your performance and decision making and may put your life at risk.

Sleep loss will deteriorate your shooting performance in multiple areas, including but not limited to:

- ▶ Reaction speed
- ▶ Ability to focus and refocus
- ▶ Decision-making capacity
- ▶ Spatial orientation
- ▶ Fine motor skills
- ▶ Physical balance
- ▶ The ability to learn
- ▶ Short-term and long-term memory

Sleep deprivation will result in poor target acquisition, among many other side effects.

For most adults, seven to nine hours of sleep will let us perform at peak levels, allow for optimal visual acuity and sound decision making.

POSITIVE RESULTS

The first day of the match has finally arrived and you can already feel the adrenaline pumping through your body as you step to your first stage. All of the months of preparation flash through your thoughts. The hours of instruction and training are behind you, and here you are proudly wearing number 163. The buzzer goes off and you rush to the first position. Drawing your handgun, you notice that one of your magazines is missing. It somehow popped out of the carrier. A rush of questions assaults your mind but, in a blink of an eye, you realize that you

DIETARY CONSIDERATIONS

Sleep deprivation doesn't always come from late-night marathon sessions of *Call of Duty* or hitting the pubs until closing time. It also has to do with your dietary habits. Below is a list of some foods and drinks to avoid after 9 p.m.

Alcohol: It might help with sleep onset, but it causes light-sleep cycles with multiple awakenings during the night, interfering with the restorative functions of sleep.

Candy Bars: Junk food is one of the surest ways of disrupting the natural



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sleep pattern and increasing your chances of experiencing a nightmare.

Cereal: This breakfast food contains high amounts of refined sugar and carbohydrates that affect your blood sugar levels.

Celery: It's a natural diuretic and may cause repeated visits to the bathroom.

Dark Chocolate: It contains caffeine and stimulants like theobromine.

Ice Cream: It's loaded with sugar that infuses your body with energy instead of letting you drift into sleep. Also, ingesting sugar prior to sleep may cause nightmares.

Pasta: It's a major source of carbohydrate and has a high glycemic index, which means it's more likely to boost your blood sugar levels, delay sleep, and wake you up at night.

Pizza: Consuming a cheesy pie prior to bedtime is like dumping grease, carbs, salt, fat, and cheeses into your stomach. Need I say more?

What not to eat or drink before bedtime.

Red Meat: Red meat is saturated with proteins and fats and will keep your digestion working throughout the night, interrupting the sleep cycle.

GOOD SLEEP HABITS

Two days prior to a vital event is not a good time to start developing good

sleep habits. For your cognitive function to be at optimum levels for serious activities like hunting, firearms training, or a three-gun match — or even for something like a big board meeting — good sleep patterns need to be incorporated into your lifestyle. To get a good night's sleep, try the following:

- ▶ Establish a bedtime ritual: Try a light snack, a warm bath, or some other soothing activity before you go to bed, and turn off the lights at the same time every night.
- ▶ Keep your bedroom dark, quiet, and cool rather than warm.
- ▶ Deal with worries during the day and let them go at night.
- ▶ Avoid caffeine and alcohol after 8 p.m.
- ▶ Refrain from watching TV or reading while in bed.
- ▶ During the day, keep naps to 30 minutes or shorter and not after 3 p.m.
- ▶ If you can't fall asleep, get out of bed and engage in a quiet or relaxing activity until you feel sleepy.

FINAL THOUGHT

As a validation of all of the above negative effects regarding sleep loss, I have tested them over the years — not as part of any scientific study — and I can tell you that they are all true. I can also relate that once I set forth a conscious effort to obtain better and more consistent sleep, there was a definite increase in productivity in many aspects of my lifestyle, most notably in training and at the range. Try getting a week of solid sleep before your next shooting day or big work assignment, and rest assured (pun intended) you'll see for yourself how much more effectively you'll perform. ■



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Neal H. Olshan is the developer of Evolution of Mindset and is a consulting psychologist for corporations and the sports industry for athletic improvement through the use of the Mindset program. He is also a pilot, an award-winning photographer, an author of both fiction and non-fiction books, and the chief combat psychologist for LMS Defense.

Ask Dr. O

Has sleep loss adversely affected your job, training, competition performance? Want to find out more about sleep loss? Do you have an idea for a column on the psychology and physiology of gun-fighting? Let Dr. Neal H. Olshan know and it may be a future column. Contact him at mindsetdoc@gmail.com.

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STORY BY TOM MARSHALL
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There's no doubt that the AR-15 platform has been a breeding ground for firearms innovation for well over a decade now. We've covered plenty of the latest and greatest in these pages. We love the newest, bestest gadgets as much as the rest of you, but it never hurts to take a look back and realize that "old" does not necessarily equal "obsolete."

Throughout the year, we receive press releases at an amazing cyclic rate from all kinds of manufacturers. One of the less flashy, but more intriguing, releases we got this past year was a notice that MKS Supply, through their partnership with Inland Manufacturing, would begin selling newly manufactured M1 Carbines in several configurations. They offered us a test sample, and we jumped at the chance to see (and shoot) what was old, made new again.

BATTLE BORN

The *United States Carbine, Cal .30, M1* sprang from an Army Ordnance Board competition for a lightweight, semiautomatic firearm to be used by soldiers who didn't require full-sized battle rifles. This included everyone from cooks and vehicle crews to officers and airborne troopers. The

original prototype was submitted by Winchester — built in just 13 days — and was a hit with military observers at the competition. (See issue 21 for a photo of the prototype at the Cody Firearms Museum.) It weighed in at a spritely 5.2 pounds. In comparison, the portly M1 Garand could tip the scales anywhere from 9.5 to 11.5 pounds, depending on the variant, and the stubby M1 Thompson submachine gun felt positively anvil-like at over 10 pounds empty. So the M1 Carbine provided a quick-pointing, quick-shooting option to troops who either didn't need the additional firepower or required speed and stealth instead of brute force. It was also far cheaper to produce, with an initial unit cost of \$45 (in 1941 dollars) compared to an M1 Garand at \$85 and the Thompson at \$225. It was released in a number of variants, including the M1A1, which included a folding stock for airborne units; the M2 Carbine in full-auto; and the M3, which was an M2 equipped with one of the first infrared scopes ever fielded in military service. If you ever wondered why the M4 carbine was so named, it was simply the next in line after the previous .30-caliber guns.



The M1 saw combat during World War II with line troops in both the European and Pacific theaters. It was also utilized in limited numbers by the OSS, British SOE, and SAS. It was military issue as far forward as Vietnam and has been spotted in a number of places since then. At one point it was issued to Corrections Officers of the Federal Bureau of Prisons and, to this day, sees limited use by the Israeli and Philippine Defense Forces.

Inland is not the first company to reproduce the M1. Auto Ordnance and Universal both make copies of the military classic. It should be noted that Inland Manufacturing is a private company with no relation to the original Inland Division of General Motors, one of the military contractors who produced wartime M1 Carbines. The new company does, however, base their reproductions directly off the Inland GM designs, using components sourced entirely from the USA. 'Merica!

NEW MISSIONS

So much for the history lesson. We'd like you to understand not just what

the M1 was, but what it is and what it can do for you. Ultra-light ARs are all the rage right now, with people spending thousands of dollars to shave every quarter-ounce off their beloved black rifles. Even with a loaded 15-round magazine and a sling, the original M1 Carbine still comes in under 6 pounds. While the M1 is typically found with 15-round magazines, 30 rounders have been available since nearly its inception.

Modularity is one of the biggest hurdles facing any weapon trying to catch up on 75 years of firearms advancement. Optics are all but required,

and the Picatinny rail is where the bar has been set. There's a small clique of companies who make scout-style pic rails for the M1 platform. The name we recognized most easily was UltiMAK — known primarily for their AK gas-tube rail. We went right to the source and asked UltiMAK if they would assist us in upgrading our test gun. The gentleman we spoke to on the phone told us he'd never heard of RECOIL — which we found a little surprising, considering our circulation numbers. We tried to offer proof of our credentials and were told flat out that a test sample was “just not going to happen.”





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God bless the free market. After some more research we came upon Amega Ranges, based out of Texas and Arizona, who also make an M1 Carbine scout rail. They were a pleasure to work with, and we found their rail to be well thought out. It replaces the top half of the M1 Carbine's two-piece wooden forearm with an aluminum rail unit. In addition to a top rail, the Amega Ranges unit is drilled and tapped for screw-in rail sections at the 11 and 1 o'clock positions as well. They make 2-inch and 4-inch Picatinny sections. There's also a tactical sling mount that can be used to mount a traditional web sling — or any sling with hooks — without the need for a rail section. This gives

A decent RDS allows the user to exploit the .30 Carbine round out to its ballistic limits. A magnified optic would be out of place on a 200-yard carbine.

you a degree of modularity that is, frankly, pretty awesome on a rifle that predates Elvis.

KITTING UP

In our opinion, any practical rifle requires three add-ons: a quality optic, a light, and a sling. For the first, we used a Hi-Lux Micro Max B-Dot. This is a 2 MOA red dot rated for 50,000 hours of battery life, with grunt-proof big button controls and a spare battery already on board. It sits low on the Amega rail and provides a clear, crisp sight picture that made 50-yard shots ridiculously easy. The flashlight is a 200-lumen Inforce WML. This version has both constant on and momentary-only options, as well as a

strobe that can be deactivated. They make a 500-lumen version, but since the M1 is primarily a close-in weapon, we chose a slightly dimmer light that won't fry eggs — or your retinas.

This setup is streamlined, with all the essentials and zero fat. It's an ideal trunk or bedside gun that's highly controllable and soft shooting. While the M1 has been eclipsed by the AR as a patrol carbine, the Amega Ranges rail and accompanying upgrades make it fully relevant for close-in defensive work. The M1 is also a little more image conscious than an evil black rifle. We know this shouldn't matter, but unfortunately it's a real consideration in parts of the country we like to call "occupied territory."





CHALLENGE THE STATUS QUO

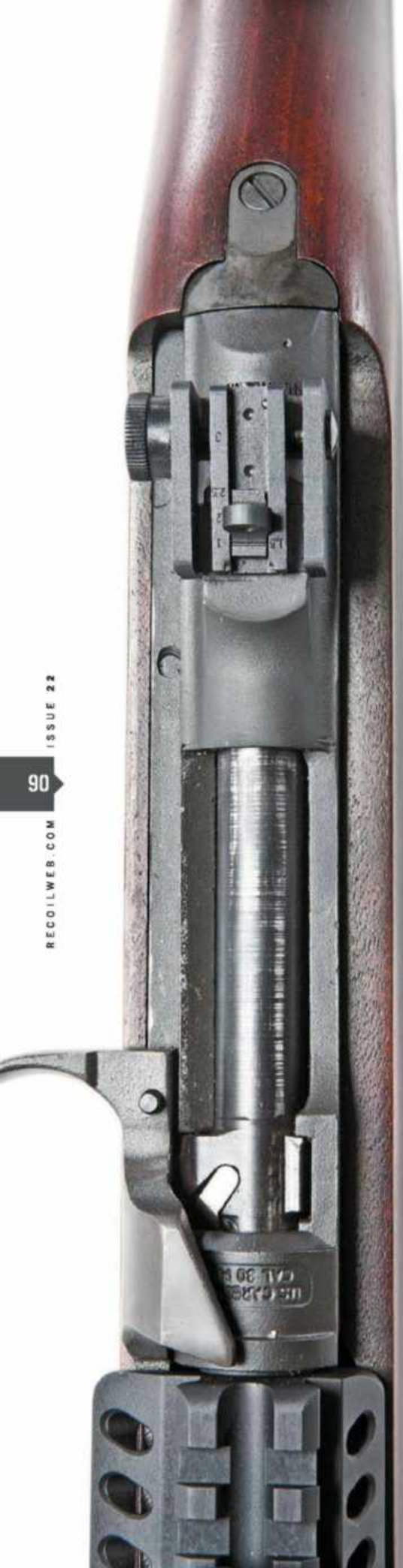
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So you're not going to be using a single point sling with this puppy. The old-school two-point version works just fine, however.

Look at photos of WWII munitions factories and you'll sometimes see the words, "War Finish" stenciled on lathes and milling machines. This bolt appears to have been made on one of them.

ACTIONS ON CONTACT

Unfortunately, we found the fit and finish on this gun to be somewhat lacking. The action is in desperate need of de-burring. Hand-cycling the bolt sounds like driving on loose rocks, even with a healthy amount of lubrication. Our test gun was rough enough that if we slowly cycled the bolt, it would hang half-open and need to be slapped shut. Dry cycling the action 20 or 30 times also scuffed the finish on all of the moving action parts before we ever fired a shot. Inserting and removing the magazine exposed bare metal on all of the mag's contact points. The stock is beautifully finished with a rich chestnut-colored stain, but running a damp cloth over the wood left a reddish-brown film on the rag.

The .30 Carbine kicks less than a pistol-caliber AR, and our accessory configuration added nothing significant in terms of weight or balance shift. The M1 is highly enjoyable to shoot and quick in the hands. Unfortunately, our test gun was a little choosy about ammo. We shot a hodge-podge of different rounds through it with varying degrees of success. Armscor brass-case FMJ ran well, if not perfectly. We also ran Hornady Steel Match, which gave nothing but problems for us. These rounds would often feed partway or nose dive against the feed ramp. Sling-shotting the bolt sent the round into battery every time, and ignition/

ejection was fine. We're not sure if this was an ammo problem or rough machining in the action, but we also noticed significant front-to-rear wobble in the magazine — even when properly seated — which may have contributed to the nose dives. It should be noted that this same type of malfunction was encountered sporadically with all types of ammunition we tested, but the Hornady Steel Match had a disproportionately high failure rate. In addition to the FMJ, we were fortunate to get our hands on some of Hornady's 110-grain Critical Duty load. This uses a red polymer flex tip just like their Critical Defense/Duty lines and provides better expansion than a JSP. It fed with the same success rate as the Armscor.

The shooter-friendly recoil impulse of this cartridge lends it to excellent accuracy. We were printing clover leaves off-hand at 10 yards. Then we moved back to 25 and did the same thing. We even managed to ding an old No. 10 paint can at about 110 yards standing, supported off shooting sticks. Accuracy is plenty acceptable for a weapon of this type. Two other shooters who had never used this platform before replicated these results.

Controls follow the original design closely. The safety is a cross-bolt button forward of the trigger guard, with the mag release just in front of it. We could reach both with our trigger finger without breaking master grip. The

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WHO NEEDS BODY ARMOR WHEN YOU HAVE A FROZEN WINTER OVERCOAT?

You may have heard stories coming out of the Korean War complaining about the .30 Carbine round's performance — that U.S. soldiers armed with M1 Carbines engaging the North Korean and Chinese enemy were unable to penetrate their heavy winter clothing. Don't get too caught up in this sort of folklore, especially when there's modern soft body armor that isn't rated to stop the round. The .30 Carbine cartridge was developed prior to World War II, based on the .32 Winchester Self Loading cartridge from the turn of the century and specifically for use in the M1 Carbine. The original load pushed a 110-grain full metal jacket bullet at almost 2,000 fps. As an intermediate cartridge, it doesn't compare to rifle calibers — certainly not the .30-06 in service during the Korean War that some might have used as a benchmark — though it wasn't intended to, and you shouldn't expect it to. Moreover, you really don't want to use a FMJ projectile in this cartridge against two-legged or four-legged foes, so as with FMJ 9mm ammo our boys were handicapped by the bullet choice. But with a proper hollow point, soft point, or a modern defensive bullet, the .30 Carbine can definitely get the job done. So for the applications discussed here, you shouldn't feel undergunned.

—Steven Kuo

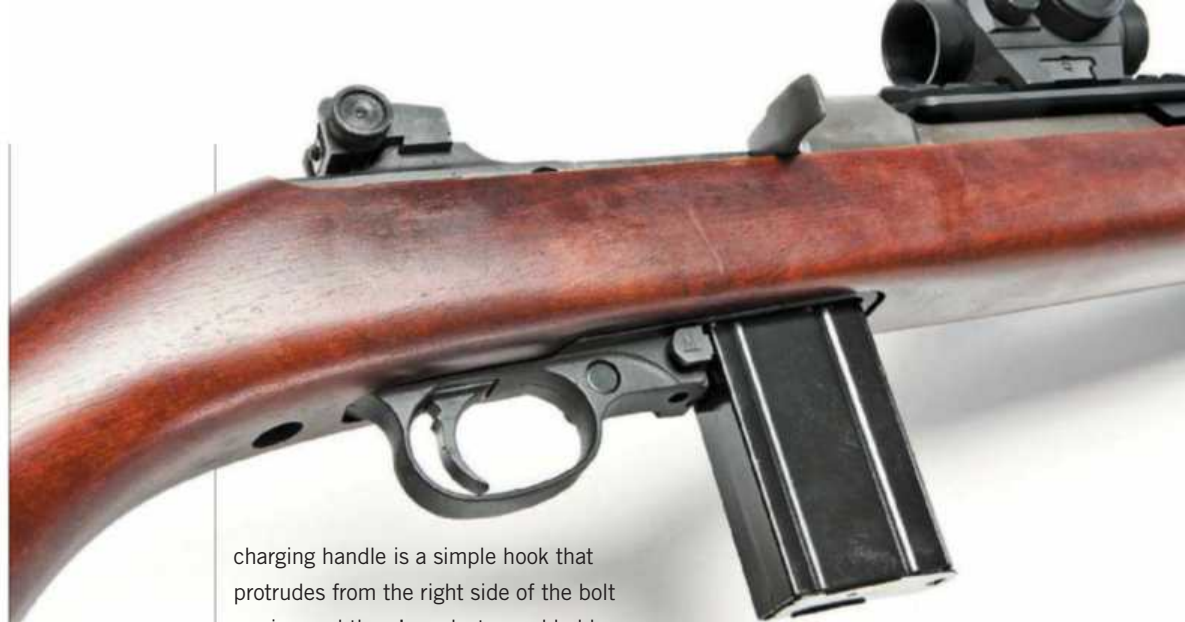
With just a little more work, this recreation of a 1940s classic would make a fine home defense or truck rifle. Or shoot it as is and accept its limitations.

charging handle is a simple hook that protrudes from the right side of the bolt carrier, and there's no last round hold-open. In this respect, you'd do best to run the M1 like you would an AK. The single stage trigger had no take-up and only a touch of over-travel, measured at about 6.5 pounds on our Lyman gauge.

Due to the excessive number of stoppages encountered, we cannot, in good conscience, endorse the current Inland reproduction as anything more than a range toy. However, this was an excellent proof-of-concept for us. The M1 Carbine is light, fast, and accurate. A reliable M1, teamed with the accessories mentioned above, would give anybody a formidable defensive weapon not to be trifled with. We'd highly recommend this setup for shooters who are smaller framed, recoil sensitive, or

just want something compact, nimble, and accurate. The Inland models retail for right around \$1,000, with three models available — the standard 1945 model; the 1944 model, which comes with a 10-round mag and no bayonet lug for ban-state compliance*; and the M1A1 paratrooper, with original style side-folding stock. ■

*[*Author's note: The M1 Carbine is classified, by name, as an assault rifle in the state of New Jersey. Even the "ban compliant" 1944 model is illegal in The Garden State. To our knowledge, this is the only state with such a provision against the M1, but research your local laws before you decide on your purchase.]*



SPEC BOX

INLAND MANUFACTURING M1 1945 CARBINE

	CALIBER .30 Carbine		URL www.inland-mfg.com
	BARREL LENGTH 18 inches		ACCESSORIES
	OVERALL LENGTH 35.75 inches		Hi-Lux Micro Max B-Dot \$250
	WEIGHT (UNLOADED) 5 pounds, 3 ounces		Amega Ranges Mini-Scout-Mount \$150
	MAGAZINE CAPACITY 15 rounds		Inforce WML \$132
			MSRP \$1,049
			PRICE AS FEATURED \$1,581

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STORY BY ROB CURTIS
PHOTOS BY ROB CURTIS

ERATHR3'S PROJECT ANOREXIA PUTS THE AR ON A DIET

All weight-loss programs aren't the same. While both may weigh 110 pounds, there's a difference between a methadone addict and an Olympic athlete. No more would we trust a meth addict to function in a life-threatening situation than we'd expect a Swiss cheese AR to stand up to the rigors of combat.

And, meth addicts always become ugly. Nobody wants to date a meth addict.

WAIT, WEIGHT

We spent three days running a pre-production Project Anorexia rifle at Thunder Ranch with one of the driving forces behind the gun's inception, Clint Smith. Our test rifle was outfitted with



BEN DITTO PHOTO

a scope and bipod according to Smith's specifications for use in his urban precision rifle class. The class turned out to be the ideal venue to highlight the advantages the skinny gun he helped design brings to the intermediate distance fight.

"I designed this gun mostly for women and myself, because I don't want to carry heavy shit any more," Smith said about the gun, "If I'm going to carry 2 extra pounds of something, it isn't going to be a barrel. It's going to be 2 pounds of ammo."

Smith's longtime friendship with Erathr3's Sheri Johnson led to the collaboration. It was a great match for this project, with Erathr3's passion for high performance tempered by Smith's experience. The combination meant the rifle

was built with no quarter given to price point, only performance and reliability.

Getting a 6.5-pound flattop AR is hardly a challenge these days, but building an accurate, reliable gun that weighs less than 6 pounds will take some talent.

ANOTHER AR

"We didn't enter thinking we were doing anything earth shattering," said Erathr3's Sterling Becklin. "We dig them, we use them all the time, so we wanted to make our own reliable, accurate rifle. It's just something we wanted to do."

Becklin says Erathr3 started with the barrel and built the gun around it. "I believe in Proof Research's technology," explained Becklin, "not just the carbon



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fiber, but the way they're CNC rifling and chambering."

The 1/7-inch twist, 14.5-inch Proof Research carbon-fiber composite barrel headlines, but the ensemble cast of supporting actors steals this light-weight show. In order to shatter the 6-pound AR barrier, Erathr3 had to get into the weeds. All the small steel parts were replaced with lighter weight titanium parts. The only exception is the traditionally steel ejection port cover. Instead of titanium, it's aluminum — lighter weight and perfectly acceptable for this unstressed part. But, the ejection port cover hinge is titanium.

The only small part left in a legacy material we could find is the bolt catch; and even that is V Seven's lightened version made from super-duty S7 tool steel.

While some larger components got the Ti treatment, some had to remain as good old ferrous alloys. But that doesn't mean they were left in the 1960s. JP Enterprises steel JP EnhancedBolt adds material around the cam pin hole and uses JP's enhanced ejector, extractor, and gas ring designs. JP also uses SAE 9310 steel in place of Mil-spec Carpenter 158 steel; it's something the company says improves the life span of the bolt. Erathr3's proprietary steel barrel nut uses integral wrench flats that also shave a little weight.

Bolt carrier, takedown pins, trigger pins, buffer retaining pin, fire control selector, grip screw ... all titanium. But one set of Ti parts offered a unique challenge. "Yeah, the first time we tried staking the titanium castle nut, the titanium end plate just

chipped," Becklin laughed, "so we tried different tools and dicked up two more before we came up with a solution." They used an aviation industry staple, Torque Seal.

GIVE IT THE FINGER

Erathr3's receivers are made in house, allowing them to fine tune everything, including the skeletonizing pattern and the lightening cuts. Running the "build, assess, improve" cycle in real time results in machining tolerances so fine they even account for the thickness of the gun's gray Cerakote finish and result in parts that fit together a like a pair of scissoring college sophomores.

The lower receiver's forced weight-loss program features skeletonizing of the flared magazine well that does a couple things. Not only does it reduce weight, it also lets a shooter grab or sweep out hung-up casings with a couple of fingers; something that should be done with care, given the amount of force that will be applied to flesh if the bolt is allowed to slam home.



We ran the gun with a Spuhr Mounts special edition Erathr3 3026 mount that's lightened and has a titanium clamp. It's shown holding the Schmidt & Bender 1.1-4x24mm Zenith Short Dot LE we used.



The titanium endplate and castle nut can't be staked, so Erathr3 used a dab of orange Torque Seal as a witness mark.



The trigger guard was scalloped a bit aggressively. It was a sore subject and one that Erathr3 has already corrected.



More than for just looks and lightness, the magwell cutouts provide finger access to stuck casings.

The upper also goes on a gag-reflex diet, losing the forward assist and material on the left side with some strategic scalloping. A few more ounces come off with a Ti gas block and Proof Research's CF composite barrel. The weight savings between a 14.5-inch steel barrel and a CF composite is minimal; the weight delta is much more obvious when comparing 18-inch steel and CF barrels. But, E3 wasn't trying to build on a budget. CF is stiffer than steel, which can translate into a more accurate barrel (if you buy into that whole science thing), so adding performance while removing even a small amount of weight fits the Project Anorexia MO.

Just because the gun is made entirely from high-quality parts doesn't mean the assembly process is a carefree wrench-athon. Parts are still carefully fitted. For instance, before declaring a barrel and bolt soulmates and locking them together in metallic matrimony, Erathr3 gauges the fit and selects the bolt with the best headspace for that barrel and extension assembly.

The basic Anorexia build is rounded out with the thin-diameter, M-Lok-compatible E3 Handguard; Magpul's stock, grip, sling; MBUS Pro offset iron sights; AXTS Raptor charging handle; Inconel gas tube; a pinned SilencerCo Trifecta flash hider; and an ALG Defense ACT trigger. We'll talk about the trigger in a minute...

THE THUNDER RANCH EXPERIENCE

The limited edition of the carbine we shot was outfitted specially by and for Clint Smith's urban rifle course that served as our three-day, 2,000-round introduction to project Anorexia.

Smith wanted to show the lightweight, 14.5-inch, 5.56mm platform was an effective tool for precision work in an urban setting where targets are seldom more than 300 yards out. To

that end, our gun was set up with a Schmidt & Bender 1.1-4x24 Zenith Short Dot LE and a BT10-LW17 V8 Atlas Bipod.

We went from zeroing optics on day one to ringing small steel as far as 400 yards from rock piles, rooftops, and truck beds at the end of day three. In the interim, we worked on precision, positional shooting, movement, shooting movers, and working 100+ yard targets from the awkward, external apertures in Smith's signature *Terminator* shoothouse. Many of the drills involved stressors that helped point out how much a lightweight gun helped manage fatigue. Despite Anorexia's svelteness, "Hold that gun up," was a still painful Smith refrain.

While the schoolhouse experience and subsequent testing showed the gun was reliable and accurate (our best five-shot group was 0.57 MOA using Black Hills blue box 77-grain MatchKing HPBT), we're pretty sure we couldn't access the gun's benchrest accuracy potential owing to the ACT trigger. Smith spec'd that trigger himself for the gun. He told us he wanted a no BS 4-pound combat trigger with solid reset and he got one. The ACT is built to improve on the 1- to 2-MOA performance of rack grade rifles, not wring the last .25 MOA out of a \$3,700 custom build. That said, Anorexia isn't a bench gun, and we could reach past 300 yards without trouble. In the end, Erathr3 understands the market's desires and will offer Anorexia with an option for a higher-grade bang switch.

GRIPES

It's a \$3,700 gun. There shouldn't be any gripes. But, aside from the trigger, we noted two issues. In the quest for the lightest lower, Erathr3 scalloped the bottom of the trigger guard all the way to the grip. The ridges,

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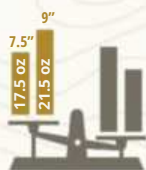
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BENDITO PHOTO

even rounded as they are, chafe the hell out of the shooter's middle finger after a few magazines.

The other problem would barely be worth mentioning if this weren't a premium rifle. The handguard has what looks like M-LOK cutouts on the four cardinal faces. Turns out, only the three, six, and nine o'clock cutouts are for M-LOK. The top readily accepts M-LOK parts, but there isn't enough space on the backside to turn an M-LOK cam into

its torqued position. So, guys that try to mount something up there, say an offset light or action cam, are going to think it's securely mounted right up until the device falls off, as ours nearly did.

The company is aware of both issues and has already recontoured the trigger guard for the next run of lowers and changed the rail cutouts to make it more obvious that the top is not an M-LOK mount point. This points back to one of EraThr3's strengths, it can make

changes like this on the fly because the company machines its own parts.

ZIPPING IT UP

Packing the rifle in its accompanying Grey Ghost Gear rifle case for its shipment from our offices, we've felt something rare when saying farewell to an AR. Usually, we're thankful to get the space back in the safe when we're done... but, we're going to miss this one when the brown truck pulls away. Few ARs come as close to the perfect balance of performance and weight as Anorexia. It was a fun gun to shoot and never once did we get the feeling that there was some hinky, lightweight part used to shave an ounce.

We can't be too sad, though. This one, Anorexia 16, is going to AmericanSnipers.org to be raffled off as a fundraiser that will begin at SHOT Show 2016. \$10 will buy you a chance to win this gun, complete with optic, bipod, case, and a few PMAGs. And, your \$10 goes to buy equipment that downrange snipers need, but can't get through the normal supply chain. More info will be available at AmericanSnipers.org. ■

SPEC BOX

ERATHR3 PROJECT ANOREXIA

**LIMITED-EDITION CLINT SMITH
SIGNATURE "SKINNY GUN"**



CALIBER
5.56 NATO

BARREL LENGTH
14.5 inches

OVERALL LENGTH
31.75 inches collapsed (35 inches, open)

WEIGHT (UNLOADED)
5.7 pounds, rifle only. 8.4 pounds as shown.

MAGAZINE CAPACITY
30 rounds

URL
www.erathr3.com

ACCESSORIES

Schmidt & Bender 1.1-4x24 Zenith Short Dot LE (w/CQB Reticle)	\$2,754
Atlas Bipod	\$280
EraThr3 Skeletonized SP-3026 Mount by SPUHR	\$475

MSRP

\$3,750

PRICE AS FEATURED

\$7,250



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FROM THE GOD BLESS AMERICA FILES

WHO WOULDN'T WANT THEIR
OWN PERSONAL FLAMETHROWER?

STORY BY IAIN HARRISON
PHOTOS BY KENDA LENSEIGNE

ISSUE 22

101

RECOILWEB.COM



It's considered journalistic best practice, endorsed by such august bodies as the *New York Times*, that any article on flamethrowers must start with the industry-approved, classic George Carlin quote. But as they're a bunch of whiny, metrosexual dickweasels, we'll instead invite you to consider why anyone might think it would be a good idea to stroll onto a battlefield with 3 gallons of pressurized napalm strapped to their backs. Seriously, if you saw an enemy with a flamethrower, wouldn't you want to lay on the trigger and send 200 rounds of 4-bit hate his way — just to see the resulting ambulatory Roman candle?

The flamethrower has always been what my former countrymen might refer to as a "comedy weapon." Ungainly, difficult to use effectively from the prone position, cursed with a limited range and long reload time, it was retired from U.S. service long after other countries decided that if you really needed to use flame effects to dislodge a dug-in force, then liquidizing their lungs with a thermobaric warhead was a far cheaper and more effective alternative.

What flamethrowers are really great for, though, is panty wadding. You see, despite a lack of any incidents of criminal misuse of a flamethrower, our betters in the media seem to have

latched onto the launch of several new consumer models as the perfect opportunity to wax lyrical about their potential dangers. No doubt a hack politician or two will be along shortly to bask in the limelight cast by their adoring useful idiots and announce legislation to save us from this evil menace. Cue Senator de León in 3, 2, 1...

Despite all the hoopla and hand wringing, completely absent from news media reports has been objective analysis of whether the XMatter X15 and its ilk are, in fact, any good. Maybe mainstream journos don't like the idea of getting their hands sullied by icky weapons. Or maybe they just need to nut up.

We requested a test unit from XMatter owner Quinn Whitehead and hot footed it to our local gas station for err, ammo.

XMATTER

The XMatter X15 flamethrower closely follows the principles first used in the German Flammenwerfer Kleif of 1906. A large tank containing flammable liquid is pressurized by a smaller propellant bottle, causing the fuel to be expelled through a nozzle, and a torch attached to the nozzle ignites the fuel as it heads downrange. Simple, effective, and heavy.

The X15 uses readily available commercial products to achieve the same effect. An aluminum 20-pound CO₂ tank is adapted as the fuel container, with a pressure gauge attached to its valve. Normally, the valve would control the flow of gas leaving the tank — in this case, it controls propellant entering it. A hose fitting attaches to the tank's base, delivering pressurized fuel to the nozzle, which is controlled by a squeeze-operated valve on the lance. If you think this bears an uncanny resemblance to a pressure washer wand, well, there's a very good reason for that. Fuel is ignited by means of your standard, garden variety Bernzomatic blowtorch — press the piezo igniter to fire the torch with the left hand, squeeze the pistol grip with the right, and you've got yourself a flaming good time.

The driving force behind its 3.3-gallon capacity is a 20-ounce CO₂ paintball tank, which pressurizes the main tank to an indicated maximum of 1,000 psi via an unregulated pigtail hose. As the pressure gauge pegged when we first opened the CO₂ valve, tank pressure may well have been a lot higher than this — our paintball tank was rated to 4,500 psi. The whole shebang is strapped to an ALICE frame by means of a few

Shorts, check. T-shirt, check. Eye pro, nope. Looks like we've got absolutely nothing that OSHA would approve of. But it's OK kids, we're professionals.



threaded hoops bolted to the frame crossmembers.

One niggler about the design that we hope will be addressed is that there's no easy way to vent pressure once the system is charged. If you find yourself with unexpended fuel and want to transport the X15 in a vehicle to the next piece of real estate to suffer its fiery wrath, you have the choice of either relying on the trigger safety to prevent a fuel ND or gingerly unscrewing the main valve body, neither of which is ideal. There's no equivalent drill to reinserting the mag on an empty chamber. If the manufacturer were to incorporate a dump valve into the charging line, then the propellant bottle could be shut off and pressure bled from the fuel tank.

Let's talk about fuel. We have a few easy options when it comes to lighting things up, namely diesel, gasoline, or a combination of both. Straight gas is the most volatile, but it disappears in a quick poof of flame as it streaks towards the target. We found diesel to be impossible to light unless it was doped

with the addition of the manufacturer's recommended 10-percent volume of gas — so don't even try. XMatter was kind enough to send along a baggie containing a thickening agent, which when mixed with gas and added to diesel, creates a syrupy compound, prolonging burn time and allowing the fuel to stick to your target a little longer.

ROUNDS DOWNRANGE

Before heading out the range we enlisted the help of a good friend — let's call him Sam — who also happens to be a firefighter paramedic. There were a couple of reasons for this. First, while it's a projectile weapon, flamethrowers are slightly outside of our wheelhouse and having someone around who treats burn casualties on a regular basis seemed like a good



idea. Second, anyone who's been around first responders will attest that firefighters are some of the biggest pyromaniacs alive, and if our buddy found out we'd been launching burning napalm without him, we could end up being stabbed in the throat.

Although the admonishment to "RTFM" could have been coined with us in mind, the possibility of becoming visible from low earth orbit made us deviate from our normal SOP and follow the included directions rather closely, and nervous jokes were made as Sam volunteered to hit the trigger first. Throwing the not inconsiderable weight on his back, Sam lit the torch, then squeezed the valve at the front of the X15's pistol grip. A jet of flame 50 feet long spewed from the nozzle,





followed in quick succession by a rolling black cloud of greasy smoke and maniacal laughter from the both of us.

There's something about a flame-thrower that brings out the big kid in all of us — who hasn't grabbed a can of their mom's hair spray and a lighter in their misspent youth? Forty seconds worth of pyrotechnic fun later, the main tank coughed and spluttered, letting us know it was time for a refill. By our calculations, this thing gets about

14 cackles per gallon, or five guffaws per liter, should you favor the metric system.

So should you add one to your shopping list? Let's get this out the way first — \$1,600 is a lot of coin to drop on something that looks like it came out the plumbing department of Home Depot, held together with hose clamps and zip ties. Then again, you may want to consider that, should you be of a DIY mindset, the X15 has been tested

ahead of time and has a proven track record in the marketplace. To date, no one has needed to answer the riddle of, "What has two legs and goes woof?" We can vouch that the X15 fulfills its design intent of setting stuff on fire. We can also attest that it's a lot more fun than an evening at your local comedy club, and will definitely produce more laughs. Its greatest value, however, lies in pissing off panty-waisted muppets, and for that reason alone, it's priceless. ■

SPEC BOX

XMATTER X15 FLAMETHROWER



CALIBER
1/8, 3/16, and 1/4-inch tips included



DIMENSIONS
14x14x26 inches



WEIGHT (EMPTY)
49 pounds



CAPACITY
3.3 gallons



MSRP
\$1,599



URL
www.throwflame.com





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BUYERS GUIDE: HOLIDAY GIFTS

Here's what we know. We know no one likes getting lame ass gifts for the holidays. It doesn't matter if it's Christmas, Hanukkah, or Pancha Ganapati, no one wants to be disappointed with their holiday loot. What's the discerning gift-giver to do? Relax. We're going to do you a solid and help you figure out that very thing. Here are some #thingstolustfor; put them on your list of #holidayplunder. You're welcome.

01 According to the description, the American Jedi shirt is for pipe hitters, patriots, and people who like "... JDAMs, free beer, German Shepherd puppies, muscle cars, Johnny Cash, thick-cut steaks, belt-fed weapons, and the Constitution..." American Jedi, they say, understand that while violence is not always the answer, sometimes it's the only answer. They do what's right when no one is watching and believe in American Exceptionalism. A chunk of the proceeds are donated quarterly to charities like SOC-F and Pawns & Stripes that support "American Jedi" type individuals.

MAKE:

Knife Hand Apparel
(@breachbangclear)

MODEL:

American Jedi Tee

MSRP:

\$25

URL:

www.knifehandtheworld.com

02 Need a gift for the wrong-handed? This rifle may be just the thing for the lefty in your life. The RF-10 was built from the ground up specifically for left-handed shooters by the guys at Radical Firearms of Stafford, Texas. It features a proprietary left-handed 8620 carrier and 9310 bolt with upgraded NiB ejector, custom 9310 billet steel left-handed bolt catch, ambi mag release, and ambi selector switch. The rifle uses matched 7075 aluminum receivers and ships with a 15-inch Radical Hybrid keymod and 1913 Rail System, 18-inch custom-fluted 416R stainless match-grade button barrel (they guarantee it's sub MOA), as well as a custom 416R tuned muzzle device. It will also ship with a custom ambi charging handle (not pictured). The rifle comes with a polished and tuned 4.5-pound single-stage trigger, is SR25 mag compatible, and also includes a transferable lifetime warranty. You a righty? Well, OK then. They have an AR-10 for you too. God bless Texas.

MAKE:

Radical Firearms (@radicalfirearms)

MODEL:

RF-10L

MSRP:

RF10 and 10L start at \$1,299.
Rifle pictured is \$1,999.

URL:

www.radicalfirearms.com





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03 How about we continue with some custom leatherwork, courtesy of Utah-based Greg Stevens? Now that it's back in style to enjoy manly wearables, a nice wallet or watch is a must. These are hand crafted from Horween Coffee leather with black thread. The wallet features a quick slot on the back for your most used credit card, with room for three to four more inside, as well as your ID and concealed carry permit and, of course, a bit of cash. The watch strap will fit most brands, and the key fob improves your swagger. Speaking of classy, Lifetime Leather Company is worth checking out as well.

MAKE:

Greg Stevens Designs (@gregstevensdesign)

MODEL:

V2 Slimmer Wallet, Watch Strap and Key Fob

MSRP:

Varies: \$40, \$65, and \$175 shown

URL:

www.gregstevensdesign.com

04 It can be difficult to choose the right firearm as a gift and far safer to help someone customize the one they have. Our suggestion? Arrange for some credit at a custom shop or gunsmith. This particular Glock was customized by Florida's veteran-owned C&H Precision Weapons. They offer a host of pistol customization options, including (take a deep breath) all manner of stippling, trigger work, engraving, logo inlay, flutes and dimples, slide serrations, weight reduction panels, RMR cuts, ported slides...well, let's just say there's lots of possibilities. While you're talking to them, ask about their authentic M40 series rifles.

MAKE:

C&H Precision Weapon Custom Firearm Work (@chpws)

MODEL:

Varies

MSRP:

Varies

URL:

www.chpws.com

05 A proper belt isn't just a fashion accessory, it's a vital part of carrying a firearm. The Flagrant Beard articulated leather belt is a good, stylish option for the person looking for something that doesn't use a Cobra, Raptor, or Aegis buckle. Already beloved of many metro-tacticals, the Flagrant Beard belt currently comes in black, tan, and burgundy. Each is hand-stamped in an articulated, "already-broken-in" curve, while being handmade by Amish craftsmen in Tennessee. They're full grain leather, 3/16-inch thick, with contrasting stitch and finished edges. Threaded rivets allow for interchangeable buckles. Plus, much to the dismay of gangbangers and many skateboarders, they actually keep your pants from falling down and showing off your underwear.

MAKE:

Flagrant Beard (@flagrantbeard)

MODEL:

Articulated Leather Belt

MSRP:

\$55

URL:

www.flagrantbeard.com

06 Kydex may be all the rage in holsters right now, but sometimes it's nicer to have one built from the skin of something that had a parent. Everyone likes...hell needs, a good holster. With just a little effort you can get one that's handmade, and perfect. These particular specimens will ship to you from the small town of Weleetka, Oklahoma. There, Jeremiah and Jerri Savoy specialize in Second Amendment-themed "holster art," but there's no practical limit to their craftsmanship.

MAKE:

Savoy Leather Holster (@savoyleather)

MODEL:

Varies

MSRP:

From \$119

URL:

www.savoyleather.com

07 It's usually (though not always) a good idea to wear pants, making trousers a convenient holiday gift. What you see here are not your typical britches, though. These are Griffon Industries Calico Premium Denims. They use great quality fabric and dye, are high rise, relaxed fit, and feature a number of cunningly placed pockets for wallet, knives, mags, frags, bangs...you get the idea (they were designed by Mark Owen after all). Watch for custom 25-ounce Japanese Selvedge Denim in the coming months. Currently available in both black and indigo, they are perfect for those who demand unrestricted movement while looking pretty — think pre-op Caitlyn Jenner, Clint Lynch, Asian Zoolander Alex Ko, and maybe you.

MAKE:

Griffon Industries (@griffonindustries)

MODEL:

Gi Calico

MSRP:

\$150

URL:

www.griffonindustries.com





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08 Pic rail, MLOK, KeyMod, Kinect, rigger's tape, zip ties...so many accessory mounting options! Rather than worry about picking the correct furniture, go a different direction. Get a Talon ambi 45/90 safety selector switch from AXTS; it's badass. They come in a 2- or 4-lever set and are easily installed, allowing the shooter to switch from a 90-degree to 45-degree short throw without removing the safety from the lever. Made in the USA by vetpreneur Eric Andersen, they're available in black, tungsten gray, burn bronze, nickel boron, and FDE.

MAKE:

AXTS Weapon Systems
(@axts_weapons)

MODEL:

Talon Ambidextrous Safety Selector and Raptor Charging Handle

MSRP:

\$80 to \$120 (Talon), \$90 to \$130 (Raptor)

URL:

www.axtsweapons.com

09 Have a backpacker, survivalist, Boy Scout, or other sort of outdoorsman on your list? Take a gander at Woodman's Pal. A classic made-in-the-USA tool, they've been serving the military since WWII. In fact, next year is their anniversary. Get the iconic Classic Woodman's Pal with natural leather sheath or go for the canvas clad Nostalgia model. The former features a sickle hook for vines, briars, and brush, and a blade that will hew through wood up to 1-inch thick with a single stroke. The latter has not changed since it was issued by the U.S. military in 1941 as the LC-14-B. The Nostalgia collection comes with reprints of the original WWII manuals as used by the Army Signal Corps and a round two-grit sharpening stone. As you can see, engraving is an option.

MAKE:

Protool Industries Original Woodman's Pal
(@protoolindustries)

MODEL:

Classic Model 481-L and Nostalgia Collection 248-NC

MSRP:

\$94 (Classic), \$146 (Nostalgia) — \$25 additional charge for engraving

URL:

www.woodmanspal.com

10 Half Face Blades is the work of Andrew Arrabito, a former NSW frogman based in San Diego. These are both Series 2 Crow Scout, acid etched and stone washed works of art in CPM S35VN American Steel. The first is 10 inches OAL with a 5-inch blade, semi drop point and false edge with rock work for thumb grip, and rosewood burl handle with a burned grip inlay. The other features a giraffe bone handle and added custom etching. If you're lucky enough to get a knife from Half Face Blades, it will come with a Half Face Blades sheath. What you see with the rosewood handled Crow Scout, however, is a one-off custom leather sheath from Mr. Robert Ford of Cumberland Furnace, Tennessee.

MAKE:

Half Face Blades

MODEL:

Series 2 Crow Scout

MSRP:

Crow Scout \$425 to \$475 (Robert Ford Sheath: \$75)

URL:

www.facebook.com/halffaceblades

11 You're likely now seeking an excuse to buy one of the GSD watch straps we just told you about. Look no further than the Smith & Bradley improved Ambush. This watch was designed by Jerommie Smith to be tough enough for the most rigorous field-work, while looking nice enough for a boardroom fray. The Ambush is the first of its kind, a digital analog watch born and raised in rural Illinois to be accurate, tough, and stylish. This timepiece is not just fashion accessory — it's a tool.

MAKE:

Smith & Bradley Limited
(@sbwatches)

MODEL:

Ambush

MSRP:

\$645

URL:

www.smithbradleyltd.com





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12 There are many great flashlight manufacturers out there, but why not choose something a trifle different and more personal this time? These lights are the work of a quiet and affable young man named Anthony Soukup of Soukup Machine. The handheld is a P60 host using a multilevel (high/low) Nailbender Customlites light engine and McGizmo McClicky tailcap switch. As for the WML-2, that's a badass little weapon light. Its monolithic body housing will bolt directly to an MLOK or KEYMOD rail, eliminating the need for a light mount. Better yet, the body tube has the same dimensional features on either end so you can switch the tailcap and light bezel, making it fully ambidextrous.

MAKE:

Soukup Machine
(@taclites)

MODEL:

Custom Ti handheld and WML-2

MSRP:

not available at press time

URL:

www.soukupmachine.com

13 Looking for a light that's truly unique and needs no batteries? This is the Tritium Map Lamp from James Coogler. The light source is an 11mm white tritium sphere (the same thing you see on GITD watches and some night sights). It's expected to last up to 10 years. The body is 6AL4V anodized titanium. Use it in low light or pitch-black conditions without broadcasting your location to unfriendly or too-curious eyes — beats using an angle-neck under a poncho.

MAKE:

James Coogler Knives
(@karambitcom)

MODEL:

James Coogler's Titanium Tritium Map Light

MSRP:

\$300

URL:

www.karambit.com

14 Man jewelry always makes a good gift. In God We Must is the work of a South Carolina artisan named Elijah Richards. His statehood quarter rings are hand crafted out of uncirculated state quarters. They're double sided, with your home state or state of our birth on the front side of the band, and year the quarter was minted on the back. Each is completely unique in detail and patina. The statehood tag necklace is similarly made and hangs from a 25-inch chain, with a pendant polished to a mirror finish. Lastly, the Buffalo Nickel Pin set uses the iconic Buffalo Nickel (in circulation from 1912 to 1938) and comes with both sides (American Indian and Buffalo) visible. Use it on your hat, as a tie tack, or on your range bag.

MAKE:

In God We Must
(@ingodwemust)

MODEL:

Double Sided State Quarter Ring, Statehood Tag Necklace

MSRP:

Ring \$40, Necklace \$47, Buffalo Nickel Pin Set \$12

URL:

www.igwm.co

15 Tops as toys have been around since...well, since forever, and in many cultures too. Whip tops, twirling tops, pump tops, and assorted whirligigs, they're perhaps the world's most ubiquitous toy. Kids have been playing with tops since before they were made of mammoth ivory. The ones you see here aren't your typical spinning top, however, and they're more art than toy. These hail from Mitch Lum Machined. One has been engraved by Tom Ferry, one that's tungsten with a Ti stem and one with a Timascus billet end. Worried about losing one of these beauties? Use the top stand.

MAKE:

Mitch Lum Machined
(@mitchlummachined)

MODEL:

Machined tops of Timascus, Tungsten, and Titanium

MSRP:

Varies

URL:

www.mitchlum.com

16 This self defense jewelry was designed by Grant and Gavin Hawk. The aptly named Vicious Circle is a more elegant, less obtrusive knife than you'll typically see. They build several styles of these ambidextrous knives, all worn as a pendant. Here you see one with polished abalone and another in stonewash with black pearl. OAL is 1.75 inches with a blade length of 1.5 inches. The hawkbill blade is AUS-8 with a handle of stainless steel. The lock is a trigger lock; the whole thing mounts on a neck sling with bailout key and weighs just a smidgen more than 1.5 ounces. It can be easily disengaged with a simple twist of the wrist by grabbing the ring and rolling it in a downward rotational motion.

MAKE:

G&G Hawk Knives
(@hawkknives)

MODEL:

Vicious Circle

MSRP:

\$65

URL:

www.hawkknifedesigns.com

17 It's hard to beat a Zippo when it comes to gifts, even if the recipient doesn't smoke. This one has been customized and armored in leather by Danny Smash of Wasteland Oddities. No two of these are alike, as each is handmade, hand tooled, and hand painted over the course of many long hours. As you can tell, the pattern chosen could not be better. Even if you don't like the idea of a leather-clad lighter, you need to take a look at this guy's site. He's a damn genius. He got all the cool stuff.

MAKE:

Wasteland Oddities & Leather Art
(@wastelandoddities)

MODEL:

Armored Leather Zippo

MSRP:

American Flag ALZ \$140. Other styles will vary.

URL:

www.etsy.com/people/WastelandOddities



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18 Not everyone carries a gun 24/7/365, particularly in the home. Without proximity and access, though, a weapon intended for defense could quickly become the focus of regret. If you can't get to it, you can't use it on the violent and unwelcome. Tactical Walls is a company that addresses that issue by making concealment furnishings. That's right, *concealment furnishings*. It's décor that's far more secure (and tasteful) than just tucking a blaster under the couch cushion. Among their lineup — a clock that slides open to reveal a hidden compartment suitable for stashing away a typically sized semi-auto or Taser (Nerf guns being of little value against armed intruders). Another piece they offer? The Issue Box. It hides your gun in plain sight, disguised as a tissue box.

MAKE: Tactical Walls (@tacticalwalls)
MODEL: 1410 Tactical Clock and TW Issue Box
MSRP: \$49 (Issue Box), \$175 (Tactical Clock)
URL: www.tacticalwalls.com

19 You know what would make an unexpected but welcome holiday gift? Something classy. Something that secures a prized firearm while displaying it with sophistication. We're talking about the Blaze Universal case from Technoframes (or any of its elegant cousins). The Blaze Universal is a locking handgun case with a see-through face and solid aluminum frame. It will hold semi-autos and revolvers alike, utilizing a built-in keylock to prevent unauthorized access while looking good. Accessorize it with engraving, various finishes, ballistic covers, and wall mounts.

MAKE: Technoframes (#technoframes)
MODEL: Blaze Universal
MSRP: \$250
URL: store.technoframes.com

20 "There are worse crimes than burning books," Joseph Brodsky says. "One of them is not reading them." Giving the gift of a book is a good thing on many levels. Like fiction? Try Larry Correia and Mike Kupari's Dead Six series. Both authors are well versed in firearms, both instruct, and both are outspoken in their defense of the Second Amendment. Of his childhood, competitive shooter, and best selling author Correia says, "No matter how poor we got, there was always an ammo budget." Kupari is a former EOD tech, combat veteran, and revolverphile whose wry tendency to castigate stupidity makes for great social media butthurt. Which is awesome!

MAKE: Baen Books (@BaenBooks)
MODEL: Dead Six Series
MSRP: Varies
URL: www.baen.com

21 SOFTWARE. No, not *that* kind of software. How about a gift that helps expand one's knowledge, increase proficiency, and hone skills? Software is almost always a better gift than hardware, and it usually lasts longer (unless there's laziness or window-licking involved). Send your loved one to a class why don'tcha? Use RECOIL holiday code #honeourskills to save anywhere from \$50 to \$150 on a course from one of these organizations. Limit is typically one per family, but individual instructors have indicated they'll allow more. The eligible enrollment period may vary; some will be for 2015 courses only, some will go through 2016. You'll likely have to contact the organization directly, indicating you read about them and the holiday saving code in this issue. That will also give you the chance to obtain class specifics and prerequisites or vetting requirements.

PARTICIPATING COMPANIES:

88 Tactical	Paladin
Agile Training	Panteao (all make ready training classes)
Alias Training & Security Services (all courses)	Paragon 6
Costa Ludus	Pramek Combatives
Dark Angel Medical	Rockwell Tactical
Deliberate Dynamics	S.W.O.R.D.
EAG Tactical (Pat Rogers)	Sage Dynamics
Greenside Training	Sentinel Concepts
Handgun Combatives	Shadow 6
Havoc Training Solutions	Spartan Training
LMS Defense	Stoic Ventures
Lone Star Medics	Strategos International
Magpul Core	Talon Defense
Many regional instructors affiliated with I.C.E. Training	Tarani Training and Education
Michigan Defensive Firearms Institute	Thunderbird Firearms Academy
NOLATAC	Victory First
	Waypoint Shooting

All course specifics will vary.



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All Raptor pistols have a flat top slide with a back-cut feathered row of scales running the full length. Made in the Kimber Custom Shop, they also incorporate standard features like a match grade barrel, chamber and trigger.



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BACK-UP IRON SIGHT BUYER'S GUIDE

YOU DON'T NEED THEM, BUT YOU NEED THEM

STORY AND PHOTOS BY ROB CURTIS

Back-up sights. For every guy who tells us they aren't needed, there's somebody else who tells us about the time their brother's, girlfriend's, sister's, boyfriend's optic took a bullet and he was forced to use his flip-up sights.

We're still looking for that dude for comment. But, in the meantime, we

reached out to three other guys with some verifiable down-range experience and asked them their opinion on back-up iron sights.

J.D. Potinsky is the CEO of Northern Red, LLC and a veteran of the 3rd Special Forces Group. The man has racked up multiple combat deployments and now runs a company that disseminates what he and his teammates learned in combat.

Potinsky recalled one incident when he had to shoot a vehicle speeding toward the checkpoint he was manning. Things went from boring to adrenaline dump quickly and offered Potinsky no time to prepare for the engagement. He raised his rifle to address the threat, but the battery saving feature had shut his EOTech off. With no time to push buttons or flip up the iron sights, Potinsky relied on muscle memory and shot using the window of the lifeless optic and the front sight post on his M4 to hit the vehicle.

"I couldn't have gotten up a back-up iron sight," said Potinsky, "there

wasn't enough time."

But, just as Potinsky explains his one chance to use BUIS was gone before he realized he needed them, he's also not ready to call them useless.

"There's an immense amount of pressure to not be *that guy*," says Potinsky. "Because if you're the guy that falls out of the truck on infill and something breaks, it's irresponsible not to have irons on your gun. Professionals probably wouldn't go out without them."

Frank Proctor is the founder of Way of the Gun and an 18-year Army veteran with 11 of them in Special Forces. He spent a couple years teaching the Special Forces Advanced Urban Combat Course.

"I've not seen an optic fail. And, I've never experienced a failure that could have been fixed by back-up irons," says Proctor. "It's just added weight and expense, and I don't put them on my gun unless I'm only shooting irons."

But, he knows guys will use them no matter what he says. Whatever sights



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you choose for BUIS, he says make sure they don't handicap your ability to use a primary optic. "I've seen guys with ACOGs pushed forward to accommodate flip-up irons," he says, "but that thing should be mounted all the way to the back to be effective."

On the flipside, Paul Howe, owner of Combat Training and Tactics, an Army special-operations veteran, and a team leader during the 1993 Battle of the Black Sea in Mogadishu, says learning to use irons is essential to competent weapon operation.

"Iron sights have never failed me in combat or on a flat range," says Howe. While he generally shoots a 3x magnified optic outside of the schoolhouse, he says, "I shoot iron sights when teaching my classes to show students it can be done."

He also expects his students to run irons and doesn't give alibi shots if a student's optic fails during a qualification course of fire. "I expect them to finish the course of fire with their irons," says Howe, "just like I would expect them to do in a fight for their life."

All three guys agree that whatever aiming systems you have on the gun, you must practice equally with all of them to be consistent and accurate. So, if you decide to add BUIS to your gun, plan on training with them as if they're your primary system, so that you're not fumbling, physically or mentally, when the time comes to go to your back-up sights.

SIGHT HEIGHTS

A standard AR sight plane is 2.6 inches above the bore, the height of an M4's front

WM TACTICAL TUOR MKII LOCKING IRON SIGHTS

WEIGHT:
2.86 oz / 81 g (set)

FRONT HEIGHT:
0.67 in / 17 mm (stowed)

FRONT LENGTH:
2.17 in / 55 mm (stowed)

REAR HEIGHT:
0.67 in / 17 mm (stowed)

REAR LENGTH:
2.28 in / 58 mm (stowed)

SIGHT ADJUSTMENT:
Front: Elevation - A2 front sight post tool
Rear: Windage
Lock: None

MSRP:
\$199

URL:
www.wmtactical.com



411: The original TUOR, the Latin word for sight, multi-axis iron sight was a novel approach that economized budget and rail space by combining regular iron sights with offset irons in a single package. The MkII version of the sights improve on the original by adding a locking mechanism to the lateral axis. To employ the sights as standard flip-up BUIS, just flick the sight arm up. If you need to see around an optic or an optic base, push the arm into the base to unlock the arm and rotate it into an offset orientation. You can use them on either side, which could be handy in some confined spaces... if you have time to move the sights before the engagement begins. If you employ them after an optic failure and you can get the optic off the rail, you can rotate the offset sights back upright, should you choose. Also very neat. The caveat comes with the height of the bases. That rear sight is tall when folded down and its arm can't be rotated into the offset position with large magnified scope bells or low-mounted optics that hang over the top of the TUOR. For instance, the sights worked fine with our Aimpoint Micro T-2, but the arm wouldn't clear the ocular bell of our Leupold Mark 6 3-18. WM Tactical has a chart you can ask for to determine if your optic will clear their sight. A non-issue that's sure to come up is the sight system's odd offset from the bore axis when rotated. When rolled to the side, the barrel isn't plumb from the sights. It's 1-inch by 1-inch offset from the bore. It's not a big deal. Don't overthink it. Targets up close will get the news, distant targets will still get the news maybe an inch or 3 to the left. For one thing, you're still shooting irons. And, you're still within the cone of accuracy limits for anything but a pulsed plasma rifle in the 40-watt range.

BOBRO ENGINEERING LOWRIDER BUIS

WEIGHT:
1.73 oz / 49 g (set)

FRONT HEIGHT:
0.20 in / 5.1 mm (stowed)

FRONT LENGTH:
2.24 in / 56.9 mm (stowed)

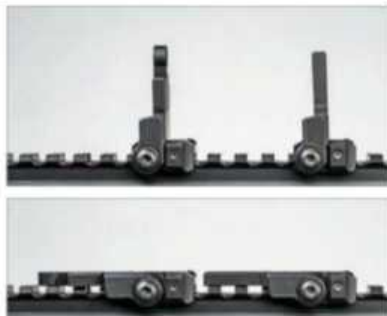
REAR HEIGHT:
0.20 in / 5.1 mm (stowed)

REAR LENGTH:
2.31 in / 58.8 mm (stowed)

SIGHT ADJUSTMENT:
Front: Elevation; Custom tool.
Rear: Single aperture. Windage; Hex key.
Lock: None

MSRP:
\$200

URL:
www.bobroengineering.com



411: Some optic and rifle combinations are just a pain in the ass to get around. Some scopes with low-slung mounts and large ocular bells present a problem to those who want to run back-up irons. The LowRider sights are a great option in these situations, especially if you've got a QD scope mount. Occupying just 0.2 inches of space above the rail, these are the lowest profile sights in the bunch. Despite their small size, they do offer windage and elevation adjustments. The adjustments, however, require the use of hex wrenches that look to be about the size of infant syringes on the rear sight and a conformable polymer tube to push down and twist the front. Thankfully, you won't be zeroing these sights more than a few times in their lives. In order to keep things simple, Bobro skipped the dual aperture bracket and chose an aperture size that's somewhere between the near and far peeps on other sights. The forgiving aperture means you won't feel the need to mess with the windage or elevation (and those tiny wrenches) much, if at all.

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sight base. Whether rail or barrel mounted, standard height AR/M4 sights line up with this sight plane. Any standard-height sight should work with any other standard-height sight, as well as a standard front sight base. Guns with taller rails, or lower stocks, such as HK 416s and SIG 556s, require shorter sights.

If you've heard the term co-witness used to describe sights, it's likely being used to describe the height of a red-dot sight mount. Absolute co-witness refers to an optic mount that places the reticle in line with the standard AR sight plane. Absolute co-witness irons will obscure the bottom of the optic's view.

Lower third co-witness refers to an optic mount that places the reticle just above the standard AR sight plane. When looking through an optic mounted with a lower third sight picture, irons occupy a smaller portion of the sight picture beneath the reticle than absolute co-witnessed sights.

Be aware that the multitude of iron sights heights can produce high, absolute, lower third, and even no co-witness with a standard-height optic mount, so pay attention if you're mixing and matching irons and optic mount heights.

Our advice is to keep things simple when running optics and irons on an AR. You've got

the best chance of getting what you want if you stick with standard height AR sights and choose an absolute or lower-third co-witness optic mount.

APERTURES

In general, the rear sight of an AR has a rotating aperture leaf. The smaller aperture is usually 0.07 inches and is the go-to aperture for zeroing and normal shooting situations. The larger aperture is 0.2 inches and is useful when you need more situational awareness, such as shooting things up close, movers, or when visibility sucks.

DANIEL DEFENSE FIXED FRONT/REAR SIGHT COMBO

WEIGHT:
2.86 oz / 81 g (set)

FRONT HEIGHT:
1.67 in / 42.5 mm

FRONT LENGTH:
1 in / 25.5 mm

REAR HEIGHT:
1.50 in / 38 mm

REAR LENGTH:
1.38 in / 35 mm

SIGHT ADJUSTMENT:

Front: Elevation; A2 style front post tool

Rear: Dual aperture.
Windage; Bullet tip.

Lock: N/A

MSRP:
\$125

URL:
www.danieldefense.com



411: These aren't technically back-up sights, but full-on irons that can be co-witnessed and used in concert with a 1x red-dot. If the primary goes down, there's no transition time at all. The down side, of course, is living with the lower third of your sight partially obscured. It's doable since optics such as Aimpoints are essentially parallax free, allowing you to look just over the top of the irons and get a solid sight picture. Aside from how quickly they can be brought into service, another big advantage of the 6061-T6 aluminum DD irons is their rock solid stance on the rail. You won't have to worry if the sights are going to pop up and snag something; conversely, once in use, they aren't folding up unless an airplane lands on them. Installing the sights shows you how elegant they are. The crossbolt positions the sight on the rail and acts as it's own recoil lug. There's no mating cleat to loose and the simple design means more machine time for things like glare reducing serrations while still keeping the cost down. We've also found a SureFire X300 mounted just in front of the front sight is a wonderfully ergonomic solution for a 12 o'clock mounted light.

DIAMONDHEAD DIAMOND INTEGRATED SIGHTING SYSTEM

WEIGHT:
1.73 oz / 49 g (set)

FRONT HEIGHT:
0.20 in / 5.1 mm (stowed)

FRONT LENGTH:
2.24 in / 56.9 mm (stowed)

REAR HEIGHT:
0.20 in / 5.1 mm (stowed)

REAR LENGTH:
2.31 in / 58.8 mm (stowed)

SIGHT ADJUSTMENT:

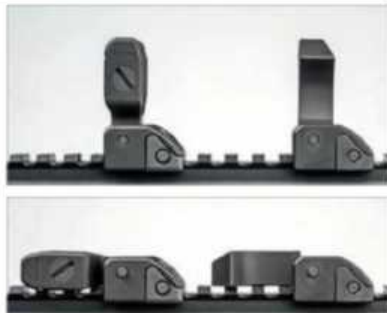
Front: Elevation; Custom tool.

Rear: Single aperture.
Windage; Hex key.

Lock: None

MSRP:
\$200

URL:
www.diamondhead-usa.com



411: We'll admit that the namesake shape of Diamondhead sights felt a little like a gimmick when we first saw them. But, after using the sights for just a few dozen magazines worth of practice, that diamond proved to be a solid feature. Lining the front sight post up through a round aperture alone can leave you feeling like you're throwing a sausage down a bowling lane. Adding corners, posts, and hash marks on the sides of the sights all increase the number of available index points and reduce the time it takes to align the sights on a target. Again, at first we thought the sight looked busy and that all the spikes and angles would be distracting. Not so. We're glad the sights lock when deployed, install with a simple flathead screwdriver, and use a common A2 sight tool for front sight adjustments.

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IRON SIGHT PICTURES

We consider the standard sights for an AR to be those found on general-issue military carbines. This is the goal-posted, dual aperture leaf in the rear and a sight post inside a “Y” up front. The most common sight variation you’re likely to see in the USA is the HK-style front sight, which replaces the M4-style front sight arms with rounded arms that many find easier to line up with a round rear aperture.

Beyond the basics, there’s a ton of options for iron sights. Ghost rings and open top sights are at home on shotguns and in cowboy movies, not ARs. Modern rear sights can have

round, square, diamond-shaped apertures with any number of things going on around them to help speed up sight alignment including, painted lines, barbs, and tritium inserts. Up front you can find white and colored sight posts, chevron markings, fiber optic and tritium inserts, and plenty of other useful and useless novelties.

INLINE OR OFFSET

Far from the last consideration when it comes to irons, but the last one we’ve got room to cover, is inline or offset. Running a flattop rifle with an unmagnified (red-dot) optic? Take your pick. This combination allows the use of

inline BUIS with the primary optic still in place, as long as a lens isn’t smashed or fogged up. If you’ve got a QD optic mount, you’re still in business with an obscured optic. If not, you better hope you’ve got a wrench, or offset irons.

Offset irons are great as a back-up for a magnified optic and as a second set of sights for targets too close for the primary optic. Roll the rifle so the sights are plumb to the bore and carry on. Precision guys without a Pic rail, don’t feel left out; we’ve got offsets that mount directly on your scope tube.

When it comes down to it, it’s on you to decide if saving 4 ounces is worth the risk of being *that* guy.

LEITNER-WISE MANUFACTURING ESIGHTS

WEIGHT:
0.63 oz / 18 g (set)

FRONT HEIGHT:
0.25 in / 6.4 mm (stowed)

FRONT LENGTH:
1.36 in / 34.5 mm (stowed)

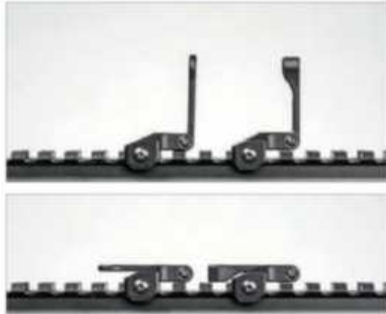
REAR HEIGHT:
0.25 in / 6.3 mm (stowed)

REAR LENGTH:
1.42 in / 36 mm (stowed)

SIGHT ADJUSTMENT:
Front: None
Rear: None
Lock: None

MSRP:
\$105

URL:
www.leitner-wise.com



411: In our opinion, no sight in this roundup hones in so well on the idea of a back-up sight as the billet aluminum eSight. LWM has stripped the BUIS down to the absolute basics, and in doing so relieved us of the, albeit slight, weight penalty for carrying around something we’ll likely never use...but feel we must have. These tiny sights weigh barely more than a couple of quarters and are designed to minimize the space they occupy on a rail. They flip up when needed and stay up with a heavy spring-loaded detent, but no lock. There aren’t any adjustments at all, so forget about the X ring; it’s all center mass with these little guys at anything beyond NFL level passing play distances. The sight arm is stout enough to do its job, but it looks like it won’t take much to bend, break, or tear it off the base if it snags.

MAGPUL MBUS PRO

WEIGHT:
3.35 oz / 95 g (set)

FRONT HEIGHT:
0.43 in / 11 mm (stowed)

FRONT LENGTH:
1.57 in / 40 mm (stowed)

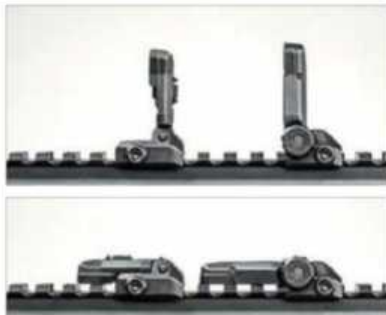
REAR HEIGHT:
0.36 in / 9.1 mm (stowed)

REAR LENGTH:
2.08 in / 52.8 mm (stowed)

SIGHT ADJUSTMENT:
Front: Elevation; No tools.
Rear: Dual aperture. Windage; No tools.
Lock: None

MSRP:
\$190

URL:
www.magpul.com



411: Low profile, full featured, and strong as hell. Not an easy combination to pull off in folding iron sights. Magpul did it with the MBUS Pro. Just don’t confuse these sights with the original Magpul MBUS sights, though. About the only thing they have in common is the name. There’s no polymer here; there isn’t even any aluminum. Magpul chose to go with case hardened, Melonite finished steel, leaving no chance these guys will go down when you’re already at a deficit with a FUBARed primary optic laying in the dust. As small as these are, they still have a dual aperture and tool-free windage in the rear, and tool-free elevation adjustments up front. We’ve heard shooters complain about the windage knob, saying it can turn when bumped. We’ve not seen this happen on our sight, the knob is pretty damned tight. But, YMMV. The thin rear sight tower is a departure from the goal posts we’re used to seeing on M4-style sights. The result is a less optically cramped sight picture that improves SA when the sights are in your face. We wish they’d lock, though.



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TROY INDUSTRIES MICRO BATTLESIGHTS - M4 FRONT AND DOA REAR, TRITIUM

WEIGHT:
1.59 oz / 45 g (set)

FRONT HEIGHT:
0.52 in / 13.3 mm (stowed)

FRONT LENGTH:
1.79 in / 45.4 mm (stowed)

REAR HEIGHT:
0.52 in / 13.3 mm (stowed)

REAR LENGTH:
1.90 in / 48.3 mm (stowed)

SIGHT ADJUSTMENT:

Front: Elevation; A2 front sight post tool

Rear: Dual aperture. Windage; Bullet tip or coin.

Lock: Yes

MSRP:

\$289

URL:

www.troyind.com



411: Choices. Troy's got them. Like bridesmaids at a good wedding, you've got tan, black, average heights, shorties, petites, round ones up front, and of course, some that are lit up like it's last call. We're showing micro (reduced) height sights with Troy's Di-Optic Aperture (DOA) system and tritium inserts here. Of the three heights BattleSights are available in, the Micros are great on high-topped rifles, such as the HK 416, SIG 556, FN SCAR, and others. The Micro's only come in sets and can be ordered with the DOA aperture and M4 (Y) front sight or with round apertures and an HK-style (round) front sight, with or without tritium, and in black or FDE. The Di-Optic system uses a large open diamond for close targets and a smaller diamond with a split point at the top for 300 to 600 yard targets. The larger diamond shape makes for faster sight alignment and target acquisition up close. The smaller diamond's split top leaves a razor thin reference line at the top of the front sight post for enhanced fidelity of long-range targets. If the DOA isn't your thing, check out the conventional setup on the standard height BattleSight below. After all, it's not *your* wedding.

TROY INDUSTRIES FOLDING BATTLE SIGHT, HK FRONT, STANDARD REAR

WEIGHT:
3.17 oz / 90 g (set)

FRONT HEIGHT:
0.52 in / 13.3 mm (stowed)

FRONT LENGTH:
2.21 in / 56.2 mm (stowed)

REAR HEIGHT:
0.49 in / 12.4 mm (stowed)

REAR LENGTH:
2.13 in / 54.2 mm (stowed)

SIGHT ADJUSTMENT:

Front: Elevation; A2 front sight post tool

Rear: Dual aperture. Windage; Bullet tip or coin.

Lock: Yes, deployed

MSRP:

\$218

URL:

www.troyind.com



411: Troy BattleSights are the folding sights against which all others are compared. Their ramped face is familiar to so many shooters because Troy's are OEM equipment on some of the finest fighting rifles across the industry. The sights are super durable, quick to deploy, and lock up securely; Troy says their stainless steel pin lock system can take 1,000 pounds of force before it gives out. It's good to know that, once deployed, those sights are going to be where you need them no matter how weird things get. Here, we're showing you Troy's standard height BattleSight set with a dual aperture peep rear sight and an HK (round) style front sight. The circle-in-a-circle sight picture that comes with the peep and HK front sight is as fast as it is tried-and-true. The standard height sights can be purchased separately, so M4 front sight base holdouts can grab a rear, rail-mounted sight as a folding option since the BattleSight is the same height as the original AR sights.

WILSON COMBAT QUICK DETACH SIGHT SET, RAIL MOUNT, CSAT APERTURE

WEIGHT:
3.46 oz / 98 g (set)

FRONT HEIGHT:
0.43 in / 11 mm (stowed)

FRONT LENGTH:
2.09 in / 53.2 mm (stowed)

REAR HEIGHT:
0.66 in / 16.7 mm (stowed)

REAR LENGTH:
2.20 in / 56 mm (stowed)

SIGHT ADJUSTMENT:

Front: Elevation; A2 front sight post tool

Rear: Dual Aperture with CSAT CQB notch. Windage; No Tools.

Lock: Yes. Locks deployed; spring-loaded release.

MSRP:

\$240

URL:

www.wilsoncombat.com



411: Wilson's QDS sights differentiate themselves from the pack in a couple of ways. First, they feature push-button deployment. Yep, push and the sights rotate into their deployed position under spring tension. Don't worry about accidental deployment, the button takes considerable force to press. The second way these sights stand out is with built-in CSAT rear sight aperture system. The CSAT aperture device is Paul Howe's approach to shooting long and short distances without having to switch the sight aperture on your rear iron sight. Normally, you'll switch from the larger 0.2-inch peep sight for CQB ranges to a smaller, 0.07-inch on the sight for precise work at greater distances. The CSAT adds a notch at the top of the small sight so you can engage distant targets and instantly transition to the close fight by using the top of the aperture like a notched pistol sight. The taller sight aligns the gun and accounts for height-over-bore offset at close distances. No more embarrassing mouth shots when you're aiming at the forehead. Windage adjustment is performed with a finger screw with a hearty detent holding things where you put them.

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ZERO BRAVO REOS (RAPID ENGAGEMENT OFFSET SIGHTS)

WEIGHT:
2.08 oz / 59 g (set)

FRONT HEIGHT:
N/A

FRONT LENGTH:
0.39 in / 10 mm

REAR HEIGHT:
N/A

REAR LENGTH:
0.39 in / 10 mm

SIGHT ADJUSTMENT:

Front: None

Rear: None

Lock: N/A

MSRP:
\$100

URL:
www.zerobravo.com



411: The REOS are fixed sights that clamp to the tube of a magnified optic. They are available in 34mm (shown), 30mm, and 1-inch versions. They are simple. They are efficient. If they were a writer, they'd be Hemingway. Two ounces of 6160 anodized aluminum without a hinge, button, or dial anywhere on 'em. Nothing to snag, break, or otherwise fail. Best part? Since they mount to the scope body, you can use them on a precision rifle that doesn't have a Picatinny rail. There's not a whole lot of adjustment with them. Rotate the rings in relation to each other to pick up a little elevation and windage, but it's a ballpark thing. With such a short sight radius, these aren't 300-yard sights, anyway. But, we were surprised how useful these sights were once we got inside 100 yards. It's harassing fire at 100, but you've got minute-of-bad-guy covered for sure inside 60 yards. The sights line up under a scope's windage knob and present zero chance of snagging on anything. Bonus: REOS can be mounted on either side of the tube; lefties rejoice.

MAGPUL MBUS PRO OFFSET SIGHTS

WEIGHT:
3.92 oz / 111 g (set)

FRONT HEIGHT:
0.18 in / 4.5 mm

FRONT LENGTH:
0.66 in / 16.8 mm

REAR HEIGHT:
0.18 in / 4.5 mm

REAR LENGTH:
0.66 in / 16.8 mm

SIGHT ADJUSTMENT:

Front: Elevation; No tools.

Rear: Dual aperture. Windage; No tools.

Lock: None

MSRP:
\$190

URL:
www.magpul.com



411: Like their topside brothers, the MBUS Pro Offset sights are tough as balls, and as compact as a scrotum in polar bear swim club outing. They've got all the same features as the inline MBUS. Serrated sight faces, dual rear aperture, toolless windage and elevation adjustment. But, they sit 45 degrees off the barrel, so when the gun is rolled on its side, the sights are over the bore as they would be with a top-mounted sight system. Like a few other off-set sights, the MBUS Offsets can crowd the charging handle in an ambidextrous setup. If you have a Raptor, you're going to want to run these guys one or two rail spaces forward for clearance sake. They also ride quite close to the side of the receiver and some brass deflectors may dictate the position the rear sight occupies on the rail, while a few might actually prevent the sights from mounting properly.

KNIGHT'S ARMAMENT COMPANY 45 DEGREE OFFSET FOLDING MICRO SIGHT KIT, 200-600 METER, CLAMP MOUNT

WEIGHT:
2.79 oz / 79 g (set)

FRONT HEIGHT:
0.19 in / 4.82 mm

FRONT LENGTH:
0.70 in / 17.9 mm

REAR HEIGHT:
0.19 in / 4.82 mm

REAR LENGTH:
0.70 in / 17.9 mm

SIGHT ADJUSTMENT:

Front: Elevation; No tools.

Rear: Windage, distance; No tools.

Lock: None

MSRP:
\$281

URL:
www.knightarmco.com



411: Knight's Armament Company's line of rear iron sights is split between the basic 300-meter rear leaf and a more capable 200- to 600-meter rotating drum setup. We're looking at the newest version of KAC's 45-degree 200- to 600-meter offsets that feature a beefier clamp mount with a recoil lug in addition to the crossbolt — something we haven't seen on the other sights here. The new mount also makes installation easier than the older model's setscrew-secured arm. KAC says the rotating drum was partly inspired by the flip-up sights found on the FG42 German paratrooper's battle rifle. The rifle combined the utility of a bolt-action rifle, an assault rifle, and a light machinegun — and had a highly adaptable sighting system as a result. The KAC barrel rotates with solid click stops to dial approximate elevation/distance for 200- to 600-meter targets after obtaining either a 25/300 or 50/200 zero. There's also a tool-free windage adjustment that we found too easy to operate. The knob could use a bit more resistance to prevent inadvertent windage adjustments. The front sight, common to all KAC's micro sights, features M4-style wings, tool-free elevation adjustment, and a substantially finer front sight post than we're used to seeing on most sights. The slimmer post increases visual acuity and complements the rear sight's ability to reach out to 600 meters.

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WWW.MILITARYLUGGAGE.COM

DUECK DEFENSE RAPID TRANSITION SIGHT WITH FIBER OPTICS

WEIGHT:
4.69 oz / 133 g (set)

FRONT HEIGHT:
0.20 in / 5 mm

FRONT LENGTH:
1.00 in / 25.5 mm

REAR HEIGHT:
0.20 in / 5 mm

REAR LENGTH:
1.00 in / 25.5 mm

SIGHT ADJUSTMENT:

Front: Elevation; Proprietary FSP tool

Rear: Dual Aperture. Windage, distance; No tools needed.

Lock: N/A

MSRP:
\$288

URL:
www.dueckdefense.com



411: RTS sights are always there and always ready. They can't fold back by accident when shoving the muzzle through a port — a feature that's a result of their three-gun upbringing, but one that anyone can appreciate. Despite their constant, overhanging presence, ours haven't managed to hang up on anything...yet. The sights are made from strong 7075 aluminum and mount with a flathead screwdriver, taking up a few Pic-rail slots. Since the rear doesn't fold, it won't crowd a charging handle. It's also not riding as close as the Magpul and KAC offsets, so it clears a greater range of brass deflection and can sit further forward, if you need it to. The front sight post is available in standard, fiber optic, and tritium flavors. Combat arms types will appreciate the tritium, three-gunners will gravitate toward the FO version, and budgeteers can get in the door with a solid front sight post. We found the FOs incredibly fast to pick up and worth the risk of the occasional busted rod. You might think otherwise depending on your use. Be warned, adjusting the wider FO and tritium sight posts requires a custom sight tool that's included with the sights.

TROY INDUSTRIES 45 DEGREE OFFSET FOLDING BATTLESIGHT SET

WEIGHT:
3.35 oz / 95 g (set)

FRONT HEIGHT:
0.25 in / 6.4 mm

FRONT LENGTH:
0.59 in / 14.9 mm

REAR HEIGHT:
0.25 in / 6.4 mm

REAR LENGTH:
0.59 in / 14.9 mm

SIGHT ADJUSTMENT:

Front: Elevation. Common A2 front sight post tool.

Rear: Dual aperture. Windage; Bullet tip or coin adjustment.

Lock: Yes, deployed

MSRP:
\$239

URL:
www.troyind.com

411: The sight system on Troy's offsets are identical to their non-offset catalogmates. They have the same list of options, but you don't have to worry about lefty or righty concerns since they can mount on either side of the rail. Unscrew the sight from the base, rotate, and screw it back in. Pretty handy for wrong-eyed shooters. Modularity comes with a cost, though. The offset BattleSights are larger than the purpose-built offsets. Consequently, you're hemmed in on the mounting position. The brass deflector on our forged Armalite and billet Mega Arms uppers limited the forward placement of the rear sight. Not a problem with standard charging handles. But, again, a no-go with something like a Raptor. We couldn't fold the rear sight since the handle was in the way. All we can say is, if you're running anything other than Mil-spec, try mounting these before you buy a set. Once you know they fit, you can bet these offset BattleSights are emmeffer strong, accurate, and dependable.



XS SIGHTING SYSTEMS CSAT APERTURE FOR M4 AND TROY SIGHTS

MSRP:
\$35 to \$40

URL:
www.xssights.com

411: If you like the CSAT aperture on the Wilson Combat QD sights above, but lack the need for new sights, you have options. XS Sights makes the CSAT aperture available as a user installable insert for standard AR-15/M16/M4 rear sights and Troy BattleSights. Installation is straightforward and requires a screwdriver, good close vision, and 20 minutes of being left-the-hell-alone.





STRIKE INDUSTRIES

REDLINE



CLINT SMITH

MEET ONE OF THE GODFATHERS OF TACTICAL TRAINING

STORY AND PHOTOS
BY ROB CURTIS

Clint Smith is one of the founding fathers of the modern tactical training movement. Been to a tactical class in the last 40 years? Thank Clint. He and his band of contemporaries, including Jeff Cooper, Louis Auerbach, Chuck Taylor, Jim Cirillo, to name a few, were the fathers of the dynamically dynamic teaching schools and methods we all take for granted.

How the hell the 66-year-old legend has the energy to continue teaching classes is beyond us. But he does. Out on one of the nicest ranges we've ever shot at, we watch as Smith addresses a line of students at Thunder Ranch using a wireless PA system. The same system that was cranking AC/DC while he and his cadre set the range up for the class.

He carries a lighter gun than he used to, moves a little more carefully, but still commands his class with an incredibly deft touch that's half drill sergeant, half kindergarten teacher. And, you don't get to choose which one you get. Your target does.

Smith's adult life began when he joined the U.S. Marine Corps in 1967, knowingly bound for Vietnam. His

career as a firearms instructor began shortly after in 1968 when he was assigned to the USMC Combined Action Program, whose mission was to reinforce and train the Vietnamese.

How did you get started in the firearm instruction business?

Clint Smith: I really began teaching when I was in Vietnam in '68. I was in USMC CAP Unit 2-4-3, a combined action platoon. The job there was to teach the Vietnamese how to use their weapons and tactics so I actually started teaching with the limited knowledge I had at that time as an 18-year-old Marine. I had gone to Vietnamese language school, but they only taught you proper things such as "where is the bathroom" when what they really need to teach was "load the damn machine gun and shoot there!" So when I was there I had to learn how to teach with some language barriers at first.

You did a couple of tours in Vietnam? We heard you were shot?

CS: I was shot in March of 1969. I had about 20 days left of a 13-month

tour. We were setting up an ambush and we got in a lit bit of a bind. So we called in "Puffs," what you know these days as Spectre Gunships. They were firing for us and we had some people in a bad spot so we turned the guns on and everybody was trading rounds back and forth. The problem was that our position wasn't very good. We were kind of in the middle, so we were getting fire from two different directions. I got hit in the right shoulder. What I remember most was the feeling like getting hit by a heavy boxing glove with a hot knife stab to follow. My right hand and arm didn't work. It wasn't because something was destroyed; it was more from the impact, like getting punched really hard. I remember the corpsman came over and tried to give me morphine and I was like, "No, man." It was like 11:30 at night, so we had a long time to go before the sun would come up. And, of course, in that world, the sun coming up changed the whole dynamic of the fight. In the dark a lot of people could hide and do different things, but in the light it's really hard to hide from a helicopter.



NEOED IN

Smith walks in front of the Terminator 3 shoot house at Thunder Ranch with his prototype Erathr3 Project Anorexia carbine (see page 94).



How long did it take you to get a Purple Heart?

CS: I didn't get the letter from the Commandant of the Marine Corps and the appropriate paperwork for the Purple Heart until 2002. When I got it I got a whole bunch of other stuff I didn't know about. I got a Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry, a Vietnamese Civic Action award, a Marine unit commendation... I can't remember it all, but I went from "I got a couple ribbons," to "Holy Shit. I look like I'm a Nicaraguan General."

I am and will always be grateful for everyone who helped me. After being initially treated on USS Hope, I was transferred to a naval hospital in Iwakuni, Japan. I was the only one in my 60-bed ward that had all their limbs. It's why I have never once told my students details of this. I was in the wrong place at the wrong time and was very lucky.

What did you take away from your first teaching experience, aside from the Purple Heart?

CS: There was a very steep learning curve there for my students. We had to teach them and then go out *that* night and use the skills I had just taught. The same desire to teach these skills exists today. I feel the same way today and I tell my students that I have no guarantee they will not be in a fight after class is over. I take it very seriously.

When did you realize you were going to make a living out of teaching people how to shoot?

CS: I came back and I was a cop from 1973 to 1980 in the Allen County, Indiana, Sheriff's Department. From



Above left: Vietnam 1969 serving in USMC CAP unit 2-4-3.

Above right: Smith is presented with the Purple Heart from USMC General Lew Walt. While he was presented the medal, the paperwork wouldn't catch up to Smith for decades.

'74 to '80 I did firearms training and worked on SWAT. So, that's when I *really* started teaching. I also realized I needed more skills. After attending several schools, I had a chance to go to Gunsite. In '78 I went for the first time and that's when I met Mr. Cooper. I went a couple times and took [Gunsite class numbers] 250 and 499. In '79 he asked me to be an adjunct instructor, so I did. And, in '80 he asked me to be full-time, so I became the operations officer for about three years. This was an awesome experience for because it allowed me to teach a lot of different people with many different skill levels from all walks of life.

What was it like at Gunsite back then?

CS: I was at Gunsite when they brought Louis Awerbuck there. He was brought in on a green card kinda thing from South Africa. I knew him well, taught with him. That was cool. There weren't a lot of people doing this kinda thing back then. It was still pretty new and Mr. Cooper was the catalyst for a lot of the

Smith with his Allen County, Indiana, Sheriff's Department SWAT teammates in the '70s.



firearms training schools we have today. I think Mr. Cooper documented pistol craft and was the smart guy who put it in to a format that we could teach.

Was this about the time you came up with the urban rifle concept?

CS: No. I did SWAT for a lot of years in the '70s and that's where I started developing some urban concepts. I started the urban rifle thing in early '84, after I left Gunsite. The format was very simple; how to teach people to fight with a rifle inside what we'd normally consider pistol range. So, I laid the foundation for that. Some people say I did for rifles what Mr. Cooper did for pistols. I don't buy into that. What I was worried about was if we could really teach people stuff.

So, what'd you do after Gunsite?

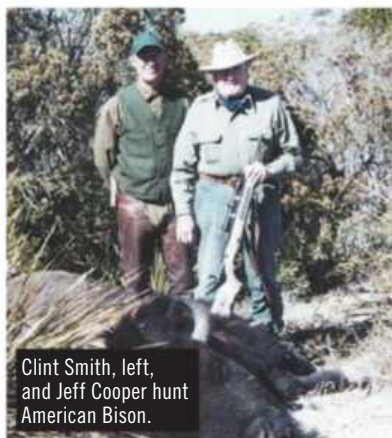
CS: In 1983 I started my own business, International Training Consultants. My teaching continued and I was honored to be able to start the training division for Heckler & Koch America in '86. Before and after this I spent 10 years on the road teaching all over the country to students from all different occupations and skills levels.

How did you start Thunder Ranch?

CS: There was a transition period in the '90s when my friend, Mr. George Matthews, tried to buy Gunsite. But when Mr. Cooper found out that I was going to be the operations guy, he said no because I guess he was still grumpy that I'd left, and this was a decade later. He decided to sell the school to Richard Gee instead. Had they sold Gunsite to Mr. Matthews and me, there never would have been a Thunder Ranch, so it actually worked out cool.

When the deal fell through, Mr. Matthews asked me how long it'd take for me to design our own facility. I said about 20 minutes, because I'd been

thinking about it the last 10 years. So, in 1993 with the help of Mr. George Matthews I was able to open Thunder Ranch Texas. We were there until November 2004 and then moved the business to Oregon where I have been teaching since.



Clint Smith, left, and Jeff Cooper hunt American Bison.

So it got weird between you and Jeff Cooper...did you ever work it out?

CS: Yes. Mr. Cooper came to the grand opening of Thunder Ranch Texas. He and I also taught a General Purpose Rifle Class together at Thunder Ranch in Texas. Heidi and I were also honored to take Mr. Cooper on his last hunt in Del Rio Texas for his first American Bison. A few months before he died we exchanged letters that will always be between he and I.

What is your take on the current crop of trainers?

CS: In the last 32 years I have seen a lot of people come and go. What you say about other people says more about you. The only thing I would do as a student in today's training world is try to find out *who* your instructor is for the class. Do they provide proof of credentials? A bio? Do they have insurance and do they ask for credentials from their students in order to participate in a class?

Do you approach open enrollment classes differently than Mil/L.E. classes?

CS: Loading the gun is loading the gun...there is no difference in a fight

in your home in a hallway than behind a sand dune. It's all about understanding basic gun handling. But, there are subtle differences in some cases for my military students. For example, I teach military members that if you have shot the threat and have to move forward over them, I teach them to shoot the threat again as required. That is not what I teach to my civilian and L.E. students.

Is there such a thing as bad instruction?

CS: I think probably all training is good, but the key is to be smart enough as a student to understand what stuff is not applicable to you. The common thinking today is, you know, take the best tools from the instructors toolbox. Well, I don't need the student with a toolbox full of tools sorting through that shit in a fight. I need him to pick a wrench, pick a hammer, whatever, and go to work. So, a particular rifle or tactic may or may not be the perfect tool, but it's the tool you're fighting with.

What is the typical level of proficiency of your students when they come for the first time?

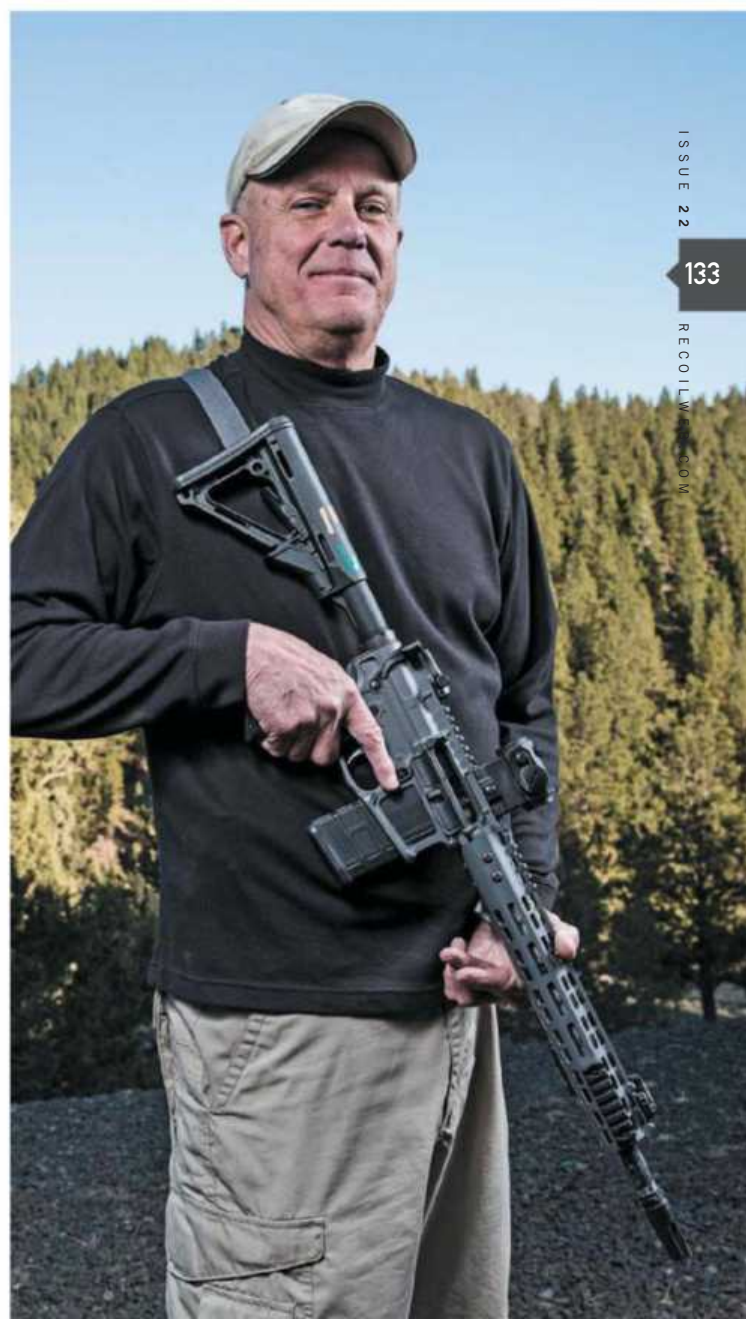
CS: Most people have shot a gun before coming to my classes, but most are still pretty green. On a scale of 1 to 10, I'd say our novice shooters are level 1 to 3. Novices are usually the best students I have, especially women. They are thinking with their "big head" and not their small head. No macho crap. We like to have them at a skill level 4 to 5 when they leave.

Must you be a combat vet to teach tactics?

CS: In the day, Mr. Cooper required that his instructors had been shot at, shot or shot back; or, in other words "seen the elephant."

The way I feel about it that I would not want a knee surgeon working

on my brain. I feel that training and certain life experiences can contribute to making a better teacher, but it's not required. That said, I would look for someone who can communicate information to our students. In other words I want a teacher, not an instructor and there is a difference. My wife of 18 years has been teaching firearms and tactics for 25 years. She is a Tactical Emergency Medical Support medic for our local sheriff's office. Has she had the requirements that Mr. Cooper required? No. But she is a teacher at heart with decades of firearms and tactics training. That is what I am looking for as far as my staff.



What's your take on backup iron sights?

CS: In my world I can't count on a scope working so I need to have a set of iron sights because in this apocalyptic zombie thing that everyone's into, in the end, iron sights will rule the planet. We're basically going to go from where we are to the 17th century. All this computerized shit will take a dump. Now, will that happen? I didn't say that. I've had people tell me, "Well you're paranoid," and I say, Well, OK. I think you're stupid." Here's the drill, I have a spare tire in my car and I haven't used it for a long time, but I still have it. Does that make me paranoid or prepared? I carry two, or three, or four, or five, or six spare magazines for a pistol, does that make me paranoid or prepared?

**If you could only have one firearm for the rest of your life, which would it be?**

CS: I'd probably just take a bolt gun. Anything in .308 would be fine. I'm not in any hurry to shoot. As I get older, I'd rather shoot well. I tell people, "Don't shoot faster, shoot better." We're kinda in an automated, machine-gun, fill-the-sky-full-of-lead time, but there's nothing more frightening in a fight than having some guy who hits you with a single round. Some guy who looks through glass or irons and fires one round that hits you? That's some scary shit. That's a guy who's like, "I got you and you're mine."

Got any suggestions for a first rifle?

CS: Remington 700 LTR in .308. I'm telling you right now, though, the

magazine inside sucks. I'd put the best bases and rings on I could get, like Badger or Seekins. And then I'd put the best scope on it you could afford, say a Leupold M5, 4-14 with a mil or even a TMR reticle. What I'd do is shoot that until I got pretty good at it. If I wanted an upgrade, I would have George Gardner put Badger bottom metal on it so I could use AI magazines and that would eliminate the internal magazine problem on the LTR. That would be a really good starter rifle. There's a lot of .308 parts out there, too.

What is it like watching the next generation learning gun-fighting?

CS: I'm not a fan of discussion forums and blog input from @ssholes who



"I'M NOT A FAN OF DISCUSSION FORUMS AND BLOG INPUT FROM @SSHOLES WHO HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THEY ARE TALKING ABOUT..."

—CLINT SMITH

Smith's office at Thunder Ranch. When your man cave is your office, you've arrived.

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Pistol:

Jason Burton Colt Series 70 1911 with ivory grips. "I like the a small ambi safety because it doesn't get caught up like the big competition safeties."

Magazines:

Wilson Combat. "I only load them to seven because John Browning would have made 8-round mags if he wanted 9 rounds in his gun."

Holster:

Milt Sparks Summer Special: "This one's for inside. For outside I use an Erik Little."

Rounds:

Corbon DPX 200-grain. "They're like flying ashtrays."

Light:

Olight S10. "It's got a cool magnet on the tail. It comes in handy."

Knife:

Benchmade Infidel. "It was a gift from Johnny Noveske."

have no idea what they are talking about who often put people in danger without even signing their proper name. I think logic should be applied by the new shooter.

Do you have a nickname?

CS: "Smoke" or "Smokey." I was named after my dad's best friend Clinton Aaron Serby...His nickname was Smoke. He was the top gunner in a B-24 along side my dad who was a nose gunner in another plane. Smoke and his crew were killed over Iwo Jima October 1, 1944.

What did you think of Glock pistols the first time you saw them?

CS: I was working for HK when the first Glock came into the U.S. My boss came down and told me to go shoot it and give him my thoughts. I have and have always been into steel guns. This was plastic. I shot it. I took it back up and told them that I was not impressed. Shows you how little I knew at the time. Mr. Gaston Glock is flying around the world in a jet and I am driving a Ford pickup.

Are law enforcement officers taken for granted in our communities?

CS: Absolutely. How you would feel if

you were asked to work a 10-hour shift and then be on call for 14 hours at \$2 dollars per hour...how many people do you know who would show up to a hostage situation for \$2 per hour?

How can people help the officers in their communities?

CS: Here is the way to look at it...I want you to write a check for what it would be worth to you to have an officer come in and find a bad guy in your home at 3 a.m. to save yourself and your family. Give your local law enforcement officers what they need, from training to gear to a raise and good health insurance. ■

RECOIL would like to pay tribute to Mark Edward Boone, 54, who took his own life on August 29, 2015. He was a Lakeview Town Police officer and a member of the Thunder Ranch family. He was a firearms instructor for the police department and an assistant instructor at Thunder Ranch. He will be missed. Donations in Boone's memory can be made to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund by visiting www.nleomf.org/contribute/.



Skull's abound on Smith's 2010 Dodge Challenger SRT8 in PCP (Plumb Crazy Color) with a 6.1L Hemi and an E-Force Edelbrock Supercharger.

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STORY BY STEVEN KUO WITH COMMENTARY FROM LARRY VICKERS
PHOTOS BY JAMES RUPLEY AND LARRY VICKERS

U.S. Patent number 984,519 was published on February 14, 1911 — its inventor was none other than John Moses Browning, and it detailed an ingenious semi-automatic handgun. That pistol was designated the Model 1911 and adopted by the U.S. military as its standard-issue sidearm for an astonishing 75 years. The 1911 is an incredibly robust design with potential for great accuracy. Its ergonomics are widely heralded and its trigger — which travels straight back and forth

rather than pivoting like most other handguns — can be tuned to absolute perfection. Don't forget that the 1911 was designed at the beginning of the 20th century, with the materials and manufacturing processes available at the time. Yet the same basic design is still in service with war fighters, law enforcement, armed civilians, and competitive shooters. In fact, the 1911 in all its many guises, from full house custom builds to economical production models, is as popular as ever.

Tactical Dalai Lama Ken Hackathorn (profiled in Issue 17) calls the 1911 handgun both “the world’s finest close-quarters sidearm” as well as the “king of feedway stoppages.” Those are quite Jekyll and Hyde distinctions to have, and they highlight the bipolar character of 1911 pistols — an anonymous appliance they are not, and they don’t go together easily like Legos, unlike Glocks and other modern polymer guns.

Larry Vickers is strongly associated with the 1911, as an end user,

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instructor, and gunsmith. He spent over two decades in special operations, including 15 years with Delta Force. His unit issued custom 1911 handguns and ran over a million .45 ACP rounds through them every year. As a result, they — and Vickers, who had begun building custom 1911s himself — learned a thing or two about the 1911 platform. Putting that expertise to use, Vickers is about to release a coffee table book about the 1911 that should have any firearms enthusiast drooling at the incredible specimens featured within.

Highlighted on these pages, along with commentary from Vickers, are some fascinating 1911s from the book as well as a few other notable builds. Gun porn at its finest — enjoy!

COLT PRE-SERIES 70 SLANT GROOVE

Vickers considers these rare models the ultimate Colts to customize. They combine excellent Pre-Series 70 Colt metallurgy, slanted slide serrations of

the USGI National Match guns, and his favorite rollmarks on the slides.

Jason Burton of Heirloom Precision has a theory on how these particular guns came to be — that Colt used leftover U.S. Government National Match contract slides, finishing them to commercial standards and shipping them out with completed pistols.

These are rare and difficult to find, and as you would expect they aren't cheap.

WILSON COMBAT CQB 9MM

This Wilson Combat CQB build in 9mm was Vickers' training pistol for many years, along with a Wilson Supergrade in .45 ACP. It's an all-steel, 5-inch 9mm gun, and he notes it's the softest shooting handgun he owns.

In fact, it's so comfortable that it can spoil you — Vickers recalls that after training with it for some time, he demonstrated drills in a class with a student's Smith & Wesson M&P 9mm and felt like he was shooting a .357 Magnum compared to the 9mm Wilson. And those who have M&P pistols know that they're already very manageable. That being said, shooters can really benefit from soft recoil, and 9mm ammo is pretty affordable.

Vickers has since switched to a full-size Wilson Combat X-Tac with a lightweight aluminum frame for his 9mm 1911 training duties, but this one remains in his collection ready for use.



Wilson Combat CQB 9mm



Colt Pre-Series 70 Slant Groove



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World War II Rebuild

WORLD WAR II REBUILD

This pistol is a refinished World War I-era 1911 that was issued and used in World War II. It beautifully illustrates the origins of what Vickers considers the greatest handgun in American history.

Look carefully at the features of the original 1911, and you'll see both how

far things have come as well as how many things are still common today. As compared to the M1911A1, note the longer trigger and flat mainspring housing on the original — both of which end users have come to appreciate and prefer. Vickers says that some builders have begun lengthening the trigger too much, resulting in a trigger

guard that is too cramped for use with gloves. Many other aspects of the original design have been refined and improved over the years. For example, if you don't have Top Gun fighter pilot eyesight, the tiny sights are nearly useless. Given enough time while punching holes in paper, you can align them properly, but during combat the reality is that you'd be point shooting this blaster.

The original M1911 is often associated with WW I and the M1911A1 with WW II, but this pistol is a great example of how large quantities of small arms were brought back into service for WW II from the previous war.

SWENSON COLT PRE-SERIES 70

The late Swedish gunsmith Armand Swenson became known in the 1960s for his custom work on 1911s to make them more suitable for practical shooting. This particular example belongs to Ken Hackathorn, and Vickers considers it to be the benchmark of the

Swenson Colt
Pre-Series 70

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.223



300 Blk



.308

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Springfield Armory Custom Shop Delta

breed. Hackathorn commissioned it to use for competition, also carrying it on duty from time to time.

The hand-matted slide top, low-mount rear sight from Smith & Wesson's K-frame revolver, squared and checkered trigger guard, and hard chrome finish are Swenson trademarks. Swenson's work lives on at Wayne Novak's .45 Shop, as Wayne worked for Swenson at one time.

For those who appreciate distinctive and unique pistol-smithing executed painstakingly by hand, the Swenson 1911 is a perfect example. Also of note, Swenson brought the first successful ambidextrous safety for the 1911 to market; it's become a classic and the design is still in use today. Swenson builds like this don't come up for sale very often and command quite a premium.

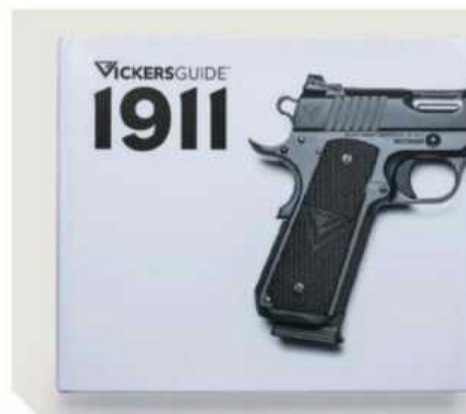
SPRINGFIELD ARMORY CUSTOM SHOP DELTA

This fine example of a fighting 1911 was built by the Springfield Armory Custom Shop — using Caspian slides and frames — to issue to Delta operators.

Vickers explained the back story: the Unit needed to commission some new pistols to replace old ones that had worn out. They also wanted frames

with an integral light rail and a tactical magwell. The Unit's arms room wanted to utilize Caspian frames and slides, which had proven themselves over years of use and abuse with a staggering amount of .45 ACP ball ammo. However, Caspian only manufactures components and doesn't build guns. Vickers suggested that the Unit work with Dave Williams at the Springfield Armory Custom Shop, who was more than happy to complete the builds.

These guns were the last variation of the single-stack 1911 to be used by Delta Force. Vickers believes them to be the best 1911 ever issued at the Unit and assures that they served with distinction. Note the adjustable Bo-Mar rear sight, which is mounted slightly forward to provide some protection, as well as the tactical magwell, which is part of the frame casting per Vickers' suggestion to Gary Smith at Caspian Arms. The barrel is a Kart Precision, and the pistols shot very well indeed. The only thing Vickers advises that he might tweak with these guns would be to dehorn a few edges for shooting without gloves. ■



Presented in a collectible 13x11-inch coffee table format, *Vickers Guide: 1911* features 40 historic and bad ass guns, brought to you larger than life across 352 premium pages. There's a Standard Edition (\$95), a signed Signature Version (\$125), and a Limited Edition Premium Version (\$250), limited to 100 copies. For more info, visit www.vickersguide.com.



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BUDGET MAN-CATION

STORY BY IAIN HARRISON
PHOTOS BY KENDA LENSEIGNE

PUT TOGETHER YOUR OWN WESTERN ELK HUNT. IT'S WAY LESS EXPENSIVE THAN YOU MIGHT THINK.

If, like many, you've daydreamed about hunting in the vast, wild spaces of the American West in pursuit of her largest deer species, then you've probably spent an idle moment or two imagining yourself high above an expansive valley, surrounded by aspens. Maybe you've done a little online research and discovered firing up Google can be dispiriting, as the first few pages of search results are filled with expensive outfitters hawking their wares. Not all of us can afford seven grand to be chaperoned around for the chance to whack a trophy bull and for many, commercialization of the experience detracts from its innate challenge.

There are a lot of reasons why I hunt. There's the opportunity to be a full and active participant in nature, rather than just a passive observer. Then there's the chance to spend time with my tribe around a campfire after the chase, just like my forefathers did. And there's the possibility of providing my family with the very finest free-range, organic meat. None of these require obsessing over a set of antlers. If you're willing to look beyond the horn porn played out nightly on various cable outdoor shows, then hunting cow elk becomes your ticket to adventure. I put a trip together for way less than \$1,000, and you can too. Here's how.

TAGS

To hunt bull elk as an out-of-state resident you're usually required to apply for a lottery with limited chances of successfully drawing a tag. How limited? Think 4 percent. This is decidedly not the case for cows, with several states offering over-the-counter tags for females, usually after the main drawing has played out. Managing the cow population is vital to the health of the herd, and in many places there's way more elk than the habitat can support in hard times. In the event of a severe winter, any excess population slowly starves to death, with individuals becoming so weak that they're eaten alive by predators. To avoid this, conservation departments try to keep elk numbers at a level that can be supported by the environment in a worst-case scenario. This is where you come in.

In my case, Wyoming Game and Fish department was the recipient of



We dropped in on Myles Bush as he was about to take a client on a cow elk hunt and tagged along to glass the area. It's easy to forget that you're looking for game when faced with scenery like this.

\$300, and the paperwork to harvest a cow arrived in the mail a couple of weeks after filling out the online application. While one elk is probably sufficient for most people, you're entitled to purchase up to two tags if they're available — fill both and you're looking at about 400 pounds of meat, more succulent and delicious than beef that is currently retailing at \$7 and up per pound. Do the math.

Idaho and Montana have similar programs, so a little research pays dividends. Once you've figured out the state in which you're going to hunt, you'll then need to narrow down the area to a particular game management unit. Ask around on online forums — while no one is going to give you turn-by-turn directions to their favorite honey hole, some are willing to steer you toward a general

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

If you want to increase your odds of putting meat in the freezer after traveling a long distance, you could always enlist the help of a local expert. Myles Bush is a fourth-generation cattle rancher who guides in the fall, once his cows have shipped to market. His operation is based out of the family homestead where guests sleep in the ranch bunkhouse, eat around the kitchen table (mom cooks), and have access to many thousands of acres of privately owned land.

Located near Ten Sleep, Wyoming, he doesn't advertise, won't use a broker or agency, and has no website. We didn't use his services on this trip, but we cracked open a beer at his place, shot the breeze, and can vouch that he's the real deal. His services will run you \$1,500 for three days of chasing elk with a 100-percent success rate.

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Money spent on good glass and bullets fills more tags than an expensive rifle. This Howa is more than up to the task.



area. It's also very worthwhile calling local game wardens and picking their brains. My hunting partner spent days researching GIS maps to figure out public land boundaries and comparing them to Google Earth images in order to come up with a starting point that contained a good elk habitat. We got lucky right out the gate, but as with most things in life, there are no guarantees. If you strike out the first year, use the opportunity to network on the ground to improve your chances for later.

AMATEURS TALK TACTICS, PROFESSIONALS TALK LOGISTICS

Just getting into the boonies can be a big-ticket item, so it pays to enlist the help of friends. Let's say you're looking at a 1,000-mile, one-way trip to the area you've selected. Assuming you'll take a truck or SUV, then at 15 miles per gallon you're looking at

around \$400 in gas to get there and back. Split amongst three friends, this starts to look like an economical option. Don't feel like spending three days cooped up in a tin box sharing fart jokes? Start planning now and you've got nine months to accumulate air miles. Check which airlines are offering bonus deals on a new credit card, then use this for mundane purchases throughout the year and pay it off every month — before too long you'll have racked up enough credits for a complimentary flight.

If you're a regular reader of RECOIL, you probably have all the accommodation you'll need. Your tent and sleeping bag are going to seem like a room at the Hilton, and MREs will taste like nectar of the gods after running up and down hills all day. We camped on BLM land loaded with elk sign, and had spectacular views and all the firewood we could gather. For free.

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SAUTÉED ELK STEAKS IN CHERRY GRAVY

We asked the proprietor of one of the best guest ranches in the USA for his favorite elk recipe. According to Bob Kaplan of the Red Reflet Ranch, this is always a winner.

Sauté steaks can come from tenderloins, back straps, sirloin, or round steak cuts, as elk as a meat is more like veal than beef. Steaks should be at least $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch thick, trimmed of silverskin. For four adults, use approximately 1 pound of meat — more for big appetites.

MARINADE

- ▶ Garlic salt and seasoned pepper sprinkled liberally on side of each piece of meat
- ▶ 1 cup good soy sauce
- ▶ 2 ounces balsamic vinegar
- ▶ $\frac{1}{2}$ cup good red wine

Turn each piece of meat to assure marinade is well distributed and covers all the meat, then after four hours dredge each steak in flour, shaking off excess.

Use olive oil liberally to cover the bottom of a sauté pan, cooking over medium high heat. Don't crowd the pan. Sear, but don't burn the steaks. When the top surface bleeds up red juices, turn the steaks. Do not overcook — serve rare to medium rare. Thicker pieces may need a few minutes in a 375-degree oven to bring to medium rare.

GRAVY

Put the leftover marinade into a saucepan over a low heat and add a heaping tablespoon of soup base to it. Veal stock is preferred, but beef base will do. Add 4 ounces of water to dilute the soup base, stirring well so the powder or paste is dissolved in the marinade. Add two tablespoons of flour, whisk until smooth. Add one tablespoon of cherry jam and continue to stir while the mixture comes to a low boil. To serve, pour a small amount of gravy over the meat and put the rest of it into a terrine for your guests to mop up with their mashed potatoes.



This is yours, America. Use it wisely, defend it to the death.

Although we all love to obsess about choosing the best rifle for the job, chances are you already have the right boomstick sitting in the safe. Let's not forget what we're trying to achieve here, which should be the humane harvest of a 400-pound animal. Some states have minimum caliber restrictions, but you don't need a super

magnum. Any .308 will punch a cow's ticket at 300 yards. Keep the range under 200 and 6.8 SPC with premium bullets would do just fine — as with anything, shot placement is key. Of course, you could use the trip to justify a new rifle, just don't count it toward the overall cost — after all, we're trying to economize here... ■



If you have an unhealthy obsession with antlers or believe that no one needs an AR to go hunting, this may well be the wrong magazine for you. We got lucky after long hours of humping over rough terrain and couldn't wish for a better "trophy."

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American manufacturing has been outsourced overseas for too long. When we transitioned into producing firearms in 2012, we were amazed how many components for America's rifle, the AR15, were made overseas. Some companies beat the drum of patriotism while selling you imported goods of generally lower quality; not at KE Arms. We are investing in making quality parts in the United States. To sell parts to our standards of manufacturing and ideology, this was a necessity. The truth is when real manufacturing principles are applied to these products domestically; they are economical and competitively priced against lower quality imported parts. Not every product can be found made in America anymore, and those that can are usually higher priced. When you can get quality and economy made in the USA, why buy something else?

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MAKE: Nemo Equipment
MODEL: Astro Insulated Lite 20R Sleeping Pad
MSRP: \$130
URL: www.nemoequipment.com

A good night's sleep is critical and the Astro Insulated Lite 20R Sleeping Pad from Nemo Equipment helps you achieve it. About the size of two beer cans laid end to end, it takes up little room in your pack and weighs just over a pound.

MAKE: Kelty
MODEL: Ignite 40F
MSRP: \$250 (Ignite 20)
URL: www.kelty.com

Early season elk hunting at 8,500 feet is a pleasantly temperate affair, with the night-time mercury in the low 50s. We used Kelty's Ignite 40F lightweight sleeping bag as our horizontal time accelerator and sawed logs for seven hours. Unfortunately, it's no longer in production, but the 20-degree version is available.

MAKE: MSR
MODEL: Hubba Hubba
MSRP: \$400
URL: www.cascadedesigns.com

We've been using MSR's Hubba Hubba tent for almost a decade now, and it's still going strong after trips to Canada's boreal forest, numerous Adirondack canoe journeys, and horse packing in the Arizona desert. The fly on this version is starting to show signs of age, with the polyurethane coating getting stickier with every time it's pulled out of the bag, but apart from that it's stood up well.

MAKE: Jetboil
MODEL: Flash
MSRP: \$100
URL: www.jetboil.com

Meal heating duties were taken care of courtesy of Jetboil's super-efficient Flash cooking system. If you're using propane to boil water and you're not using this, you're doing it wrong.

MAKE: Barnes
MODEL: VOR-TX 150-grain TTSX
MSRP: \$40 (box of 20)
URL: www.barnesbullets.com

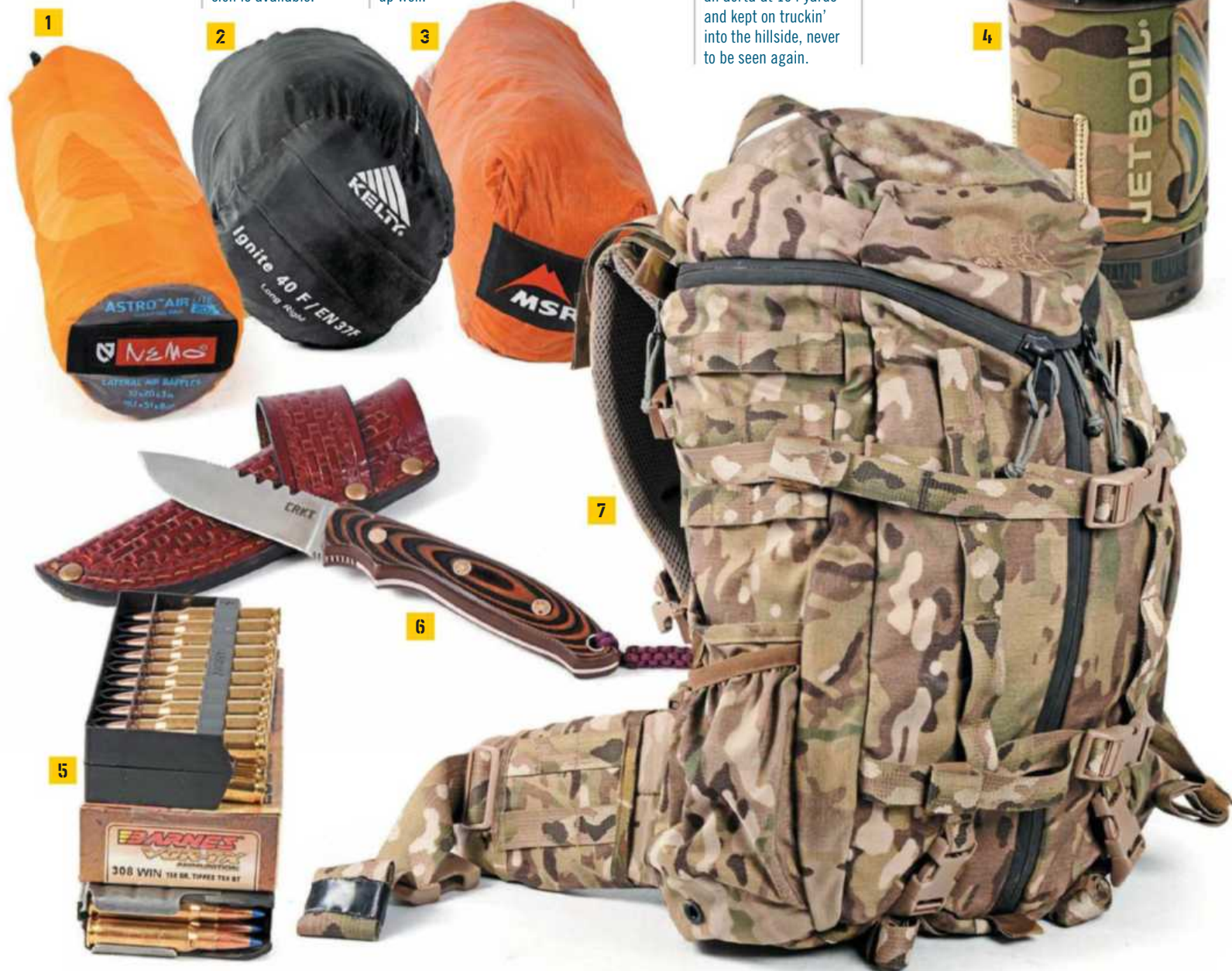
Elk are huge and our .308 carbine's stubby 16-inch barrel didn't develop much velocity — with terminal ballistics at a premium, it pays to use a high-quality bullet. We're partial to Nosler Accubonds, or the Barnes VOR-TX 150-grain TTSX here, which blew through two ribs, a pair of lungs and an aorta at 164 yards and kept on truckin' into the hillside, never to be seen again.

MAKE: CRKT
MODEL: Hunt'n Fisch
MSRP: \$100
URL: www.crkt.com

Once the animal is down, the hard work begins. Field dressing, skinning, and quartering was performed with CRKT's Hunt'n Fisch — its 3-inch blade made short work of our yearling elk and only once needed touching up with a diamond hone.

MAKE: Mystery Ranch
MODEL: 3 Day Assault Pack
MSRP: \$325
URL: www.mysteryranch.com

We could have gotten away with a smaller bag, but Mystery Ranch's 3 Day Assault Pack is so comfortable that you forget you're wearing it. It swallowed everything we needed for long days on the hill and could have humped most of our camping gear, too.



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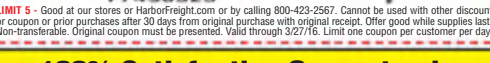
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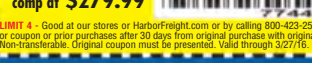
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COMPLEX ROUTINES MADE SIMPLE

HOW TO GET YOUR BURN ON WITH A SIMPLE BARBELL

STORY AND PHOTOS BY PAT MCNAMARA

Do you have a rigorous travel schedule? Or perhaps you work a graveyard shift that leaves you smoked when you're done? It's sometimes hard to find the intestinal fortitude to work out. Sometimes, something is better than nothing. A quick fix for me is to perform a barbell complex.

You may recall from my previous articles that I developed a program called Combat Strength Training (CST), designed to retrofit the combat chassis so that it performs with maximum efficiency at maximum capacity. Focusing on self-preservation and longevity, CST introduces the chassis and its external components to power, strength, and agility training in all planes of motion within the full muscle spectrum range. It enhances your performance and tactical effectiveness through maintenance, education, and combat-replicated movements, while following a safe, comprehensive, systematic, and progressive format.

As the chassis is upgraded it becomes a battlefield multiplier, which in turn becomes a force multiplier. CST improves rate of force production, strength, muscular development, speed, quickness, proprioception, and functional flexibility. (Check out Issues 9, 11, 12, 13, 16, and 19, as well as my new CST e-Book at www.combatstrengthtraining.com, for more details.)

When I'm on the road, I don't always have the time or the equipment to adhere to all of my CST principles and guidelines for working out. I have to find a gym near my hotel, preferably on the way back from the range. Moreover, at times I have to embrace the suck and buy a visitor's pass at an L.A. Fitness or some other pseudo bastion of fitness. Frankly, I don't want to spend much time in these places because the mouth-breathing, concentration-curling, bench-pressing, calf-raising, mirror-flexing muscle heads make me hypoxic.

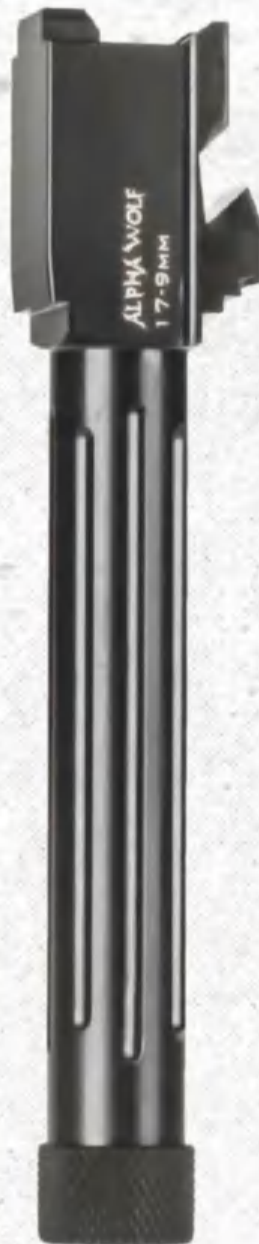
WARNING!

The exercises and content expressed in this column are for illustrative purposes only. Consult your physician before trying any physical activity or nutritional plan. RECOIL and its contributors are not responsible for any harm or injuries sustained while attempting these techniques.

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As I plan a scheme of maneuver, I navigate my way through the endless maze of bench presses in search of a single barbell or a set of dumbbells. If I do things right, that's all I need. Additionally, it won't take long, and it'll get me in and out quickly.

BARBELL COMPLEX ROUTINE

A barbell complex routine utilizes a single, loaded barbell for a set of exercises done together. It builds muscle, increases strength, and burns fat. It's equipment-minimal, hits your entire body, and provides a high-intensity workout in very little time. Barbell complexes are one of the most effective training methods for anyone looking to get fitter, faster, stronger, or leaner. But, of course, there's a catch: they're a smoker... if done at maximal effort. If anyone ever tells you they were doing barbell complexes and that they're not challenging, those guys aren't loading the bar with enough weight or giving sufficient effort.

Moving at multiple joints, as you do in presses and squats, ensures that you're using the most muscle possible which, in turn, elevates metabolic and anabolic responses. Using full body movements, such as cleans and deadlifts, offers functional and athletic benefits, while also increasing caloric expenditure.

Barbell complex workouts are a great way to burn calories and fat, as well as to build strength. They're a great alternative to cardio — they get your heart rate up via consecutive movement with weight graduating from light to heavy. You'll get a total body workout, focusing on multiple muscle groups.

The idea here is to do five barbell exercises back to back without taking a break. Use a weight that you can lift for five reps for each exercise, while adding weight to each set. Finding the weights that are right for you may require some trial and error the first time through. It's a good idea to start with a 45-pound Olympic bar, then add weight gradually.

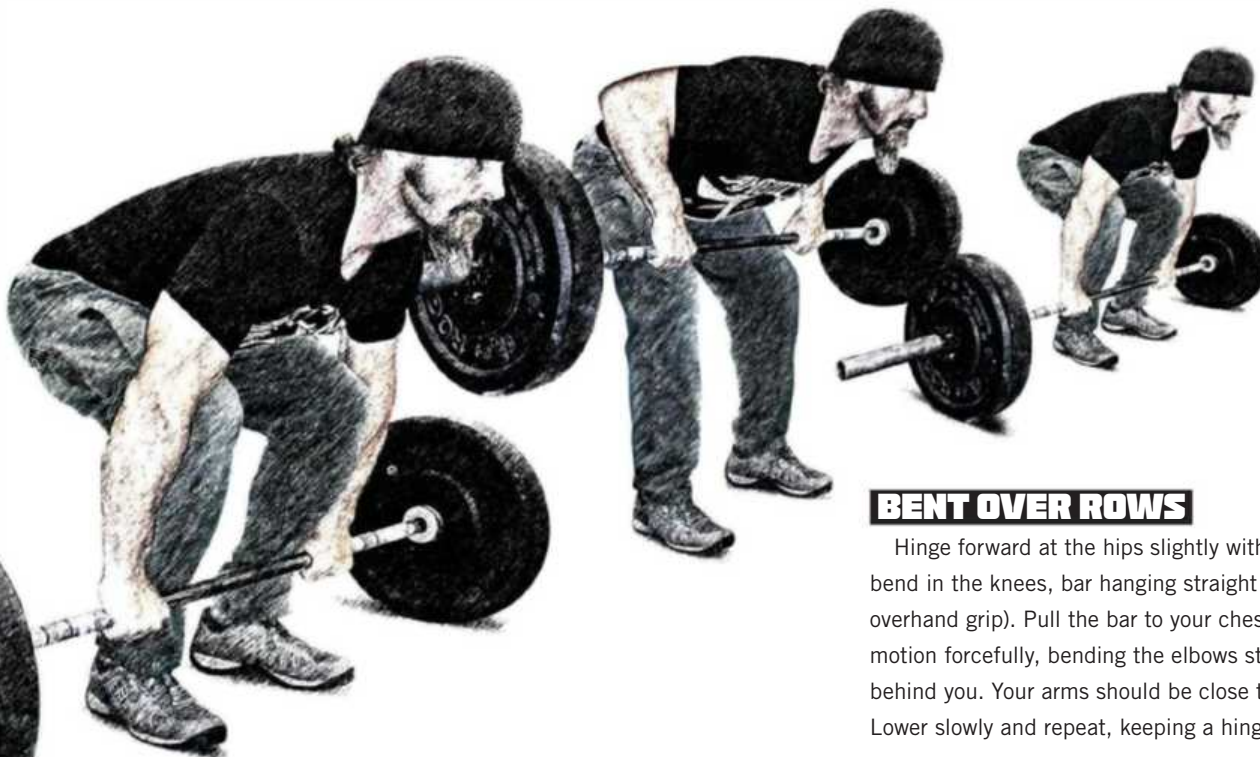
These are all Olympic-style lifts at a micro level — performing compound lifts like Olympic lifts results in greater fitness levels, increased caloric expenditure, and improved total body strength and power development.

But before you touch anything that increases resistance, make sure you warm up properly. The purpose is to increase your body temperature, helping to improve muscle and tendon flexibility and pliability in order to facilitate an improved range of motion.

THE ROUTINE

Complete five sets. After completing the set of five exercises take a two-minute break. It's very important that you rest between sets to give your muscles a break from the heavy weight — otherwise you may cause too much strain on them. As a bonus, do the barbell complex in intervals, giving yourself the same amount of rest time between each set.

After warming up, complete the first set with the bar only.



BENT OVER ROWS

Hinge forward at the hips slightly with a slight bend in the knees, bar hanging straight down (use an overhand grip). Pull the bar to your chest in a rowing motion forcefully, bending the elbows straight back behind you. Your arms should be close to your ribs. Lower slowly and repeat, keeping a hinged position.



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Hold the barbell in front of you. Bend knees slightly as you hinge forward at your hips and lower the bar toward the ground. Lift up forcefully to a standing position, squeezing your glutes at the top of the movement. Repeat.



HANG CLEAN

Hinge forward at the hips slightly, with a slight bend in the knee and the barbell hanging in front of your knees, with overhand grip. In a forceful motion, lift the bar up in front of your shoulders as you flip your wrists and straighten your legs, so that your palms are now facing up. Reverse the motion back to the starting position and repeat.

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When it's time to work, use a timer to monitor your intervals. In my work out, I take two minutes to complete each set of work and rest. Each set takes me roughly 30 seconds to complete, leaving about a minute and a half to recover. Figure out times that work for you.

Today I started with 75 pounds. The set of five, five, five, five, and five took me 30 seconds. I rested a minute and a half while increasing the weight to 95 pounds. The next set started on the two-minute mark. It took 30 seconds as well, then I increased the weight to 115 pounds. This set took the same amount of time, so I was rewarded with the same break time. I boosted the weight to 135 pounds for the fourth set and to 155 pounds for the last. This quick workout took me a total of about eight-and-a-half minutes to finish — but I sure felt as though I worked a whole lot. And it got me out of the gym quickly, away from the gym troglodytes and with some sense of accomplishment.

To increase the intensity of the workout, either add more weight or reduce the amount of rest time between sets. If dumbbells are all that you have, the barbell can easily be substituted with a single or a pair of dumbbells. This increases the difficulty.

Time is typically a limiting factor — or in many cases an easy excuse to avoid working out. With this barbell complex routine, your excuses have been whittled away. It can be performed several times a week, with a barbell, dumbbells, or a canvas bag filled with raw earth. So get some work done. ■

FRONT SQUAT

Start with the bar in front of your shoulders, wrists turned up and elbows bent. Keeping the bar steady, lower into a squat until your knees are bent 90 degrees, then forcefully lift back up to the starting position. Repeat.

OVERHEAD PUSH PRESS

Start with the bar in front of your shoulders, wrists turned up and elbows bent. Forcefully push the bar straight up over your head, pause, return to start, and repeat. Bend your knees slightly to help press the weight up.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

• www.tmacsinc.com

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Pat McNamara (Mac) has 22 years of special operations experience, 13 of which were in the U.S. Army's 1st SFOD-D (Delta). He has extensive experience in hostile fire/combat zones in the Middle East and eastern Europe. He trains individuals at basic and advanced levels of marksmanship and combat tactics. Based on his wide-ranging experience, McNamara emphasizes a continuous thought process and accountability, utilizing a training methodology that is safe, effective, and combat relevant. He retired from the Army's premier hostage-rescue unit as a sergeant major and is the author of *T.A.P.S.* (Tactical Application of Practical Shooting) and *Sentinel*.

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BY DAVID REEDER

Gun lifestyle. That's a pretty damn subjective term if you want my opinion (which you're going to get even if you didn't ask for it). Your gun lifestyle may not be the same as his or her lifestyle. I have to remind myself of that periodically to stay grounded. Lots of pro-Second Amendment people have never heard the term OODA loop. We're over here discussing the relative merits of various barrel lengths on rifles and SBRs and they're over there saying, "What is this sight radius of which you speak?"

That's reality, and if you live guns and gear and tactics everyday it's easy to lose sight of that.

As part of our effort to stay grounded we've been bringing a variety of people in our training events and evaluation processes. For instance, I've brought a 40-something-year-old plumber into the long-term review of a Smith & Bradley watch. He's going to beat the shit out of that thing at least from now until SHOT Show, which is definitely a different perspective on it than what Iain or I would provide. Another example? Helen DuFriend. We wanted to see and hear what a grandmother thought of hitting the range and the shoothouse with Steve Fisher and a class of more traditional meat-eaters (#grandmamaximus). Watch us online for future articles involving the "everyman."

There are a few other things going on. We added a Canadian contributor to the lineup, so help us welcome Ryan Houtekamer aboard. He's prior service and a good writer, and gosh is he polite. Way more polite than that damn Searson, but really, who isn't?

As usual there's lots going on. Several of our team have been working to give you some more great unique gift ideas for the holidays. I'm talking about the individual artisan or craftsman building kick ass stuff in his garage — those kinds of gifts. We'll be using the hashtags #thingstolustfor and #holidayplunder to help you find them.

Lastly we've had team members traveling all over. Some have been working on primitive survival stuff and others learning breaching skills. I sent one poor bastard to a week long CQB course from which he returned home a gorgeous shade of greenish blue from all the marker cartridge hits.

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Who doesn't like science fiction? Even if you're not a die-hard fan, we're sure at least one of your favorite movies or TV shows falls into that category and that you may even be one of those sentimentalists who cried when you saw the trailer for the next *Star Wars* movie. Either way, we've selected a few of our favorites that are sure to bring out the kid in you.

Speaking of *Star Wars*, you can deck out your gear with the likeness of your favorite bounty hunter done up in sort of an eight-bit motif. Or if you want to go with more modern classics, Robert Downey Jr. fans will be happy to know a pixilated version of Ironman can be had as well. While many would argue that zombies are horror, those who actually read *I Am Legend* before it became one of the many film adaptations would likely disagree. We have a zombie hunter patch for you bookworms. And if you love DeLoreans, or just Marty McFly, you'll be happy to know the flux capacitor is still fluxing with another selection. And Always Outnumbered joined forces with Aprilla Design to come up with a limited-edition version of their Brick mascot. ■



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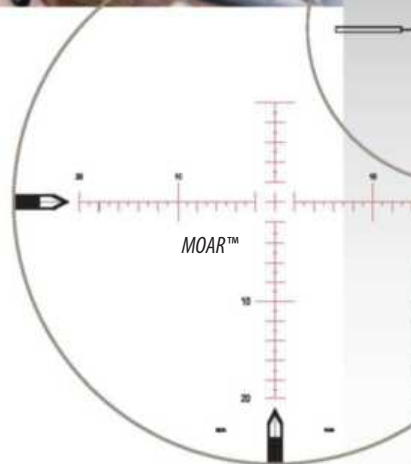
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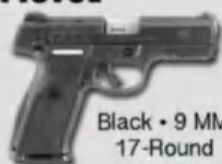
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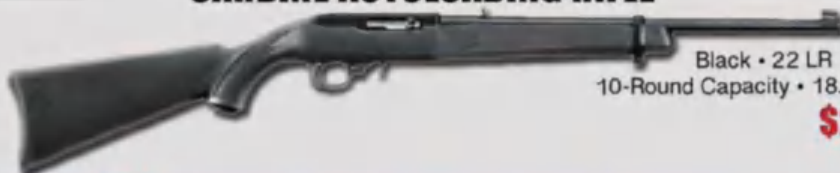
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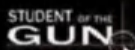
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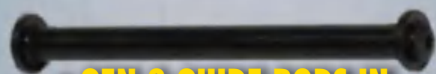
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12. Tax Status: The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes:
☒ Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months
☐ Has Changed During the Preceding 12 Months

13. Publication Title: Recoil
14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: Nov/Dec-15

15. Extent and Nature of Circulation:

	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run)	231,778	237,920
b. Paid Circulation (By Mail and Outside the Mail)		

- (1) Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)

	12,102	13,323
(2) Mailed In-County Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)	0	0

- (3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mails Including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS

	83,083	82,989
(4) Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail Through the USPS (e.g. First-Class Mail)	0	0

- c. Total Paid Distribution (Sum of 15a (1), (2), (3) and (4))

	95,185	96,322
d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (By Mail and Outside the Mail)		

- (1) Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541

	693	752
(2) Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541	0	0

- (3) Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes Through the USPS (e.g. First-Class Mail)

	0	0
(4) Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail (carriers or other means)	2,928	0

- e. Total Free or Nominal Distribution (Sum of 15d (1), (2), (3) and (4))

	3,621	752
f. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15e)	98,816	97,074

- g. Copies not Distributed [See Instructions to Publishers #4 (page#3)]

	132,962	140,846
h. Total (Sum of 15f and 15g)	231,778	237,920

- i. Percent Paid (15c divided by 15f times 100)

	96.3%	99.2%
16. Electronic Copy Circulation:	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date

- a. Paid Electronic Copies

	25,075	25,862
b. Total Paid Print Copies (Line 15c) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)	120,270	122,184
c. Total Requested Copy Distribution (Line 15f) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)	123,891	122,936
d. Percent Paid (Both Print & Electric Copies) (16b divided by 15c x 100)	97.1%	99.4%

17. I certify that 50% of all my distributed copies (Electric & Print) are paid above a nominal price.
17. Publication of Statement of Ownership:
☒ If the publication is a general publication, publication of this statement is required. Will be printed in the Jan/Feb #22 issue of this publication.
18. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner:
Thomas Statz, SVP Consumer Marketing 10/01/2015

I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including civil penalties).

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PHOTOGRAPHER: Jorge Nuñez @jorgehnunez

HAIR & MAKEUP: Liza Macawilli Ramos @lizamakeup

RIFLE

- › Century Arms RAS47
- › Magpul MOE AK Hand Guard, ZHUKOV-S Stock, & PMAG 30 AK/AKM MOE
- › Strike Industries AK Enhanced Pistol Grip, AK Rear Rail Kit, & AK Shock Buffer
- › Echo Nine Three V3/QD Sling Adaptor & Dual Mode Sling (QD)
- › G-Code Scorpion 762 Rifle Mag Carrier (with Rifle Belt Loop)

PISTOL

- › Kimber Stainless Target II (9mm)
- › Kimber 1911 Stainless Steel Magazine (9 Round, 9mm)
- › Kimber 1911 Extended Magazine Base Pads
- › G-Code OSH RTI Kydex Holster (with Shirt Guard and RTI Rotating Belt Mount)
- › G-Code Scorpion Single-Stack Pistol Mag Carrier (with Pistol Belt Loop)
- › G-Code MULE ISS Carry Platform Drop Leg Holster (with RTI Downstrap)
- › G-Code Contact Series Operator's Belt (Cobra Buckle with D-Ring)

OPTIC

- › Trijicon MRO (2.0 MOA)
- › Trijicon MRO Low Mount Adapter

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